

"SOCIAL GRAFTERS." BY LILIAN BELL
OCTOBER

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PARIS

Crisis in the Stock Market

The Lawson campaign is bearing a good many different kinds of fruit in the stock market. Some of the most bullish have changed to the bear side on account of it. Some who have not been inclined to take any stock in the permanency of the advance, have now been influenced to look on the brightside of things and have been doing some buying. Mr. Lawson himself has been operating his blind pool in a manner that is Greek to almost everyone but himself.

The Crops and the Election

There is a practical unanimity of opinion that both the crops and the election will turn out favorably to Wall street interests, and as a consequence there is more general enthusiasm on the bull side of the market when it is strong than there is bearish enthusiasm when it is weak. One of the big questions, however, is as to *what will follow the gathering of the crops and the ballots*. Will there then be a quick revival in general trade or will there be a disappointing response to the prayers of the prosperity boomers?

Stories of Receiverships

The Street is hearing a good many stories of possible receiverships involving more or less important railroads. It behooves the one who is interested in the market to acquaint himself with the actual conditions and the probable effect on market values if the dire predictions of the pessimists come true. Manifestly every trader or investor was never more in need of sound, legitimate counsel.

There are a number of so-called financial bureaus doing business in the Street. *Many of them have been in operation only a few months* and consequently are in no position to give any but questionable advice. There is one bureau, however, which is accepted in the Street as the BEST OF THEM ALL and the only one qualified by the experience of nearly twenty years acquaintance with Wall street's methods to furnish honest, sane, reliable advice on the market's probable trend. It is edited by those in charge of the financial columns of TOWN TOPICS. Its service includes daily bulletins for brokerage houses and daily letters and wires for in- or out-of-town clients. This bureau operates absolutely no accounts and *its advice is conservative, unbiased and well worth the seeking*. ITS TERMS ARE VERY REASONABLE. If you are interested in the stock market or any of the speculative markets you should write at once for full particulars regarding this service to

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A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

Vol. XXVI

OCTOBER, 1908

No. 2

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THE GORGEOUS ISLE

By Gertrude Atherton

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

The scene is laid in Nevis, an island of the Lesser Antilles in the British West Indies; time, the earlier half of the nineteenth century, when Nevis was a fashionable winter resort of the English aristocracy. Anne Percy, an unsophisticated young Englishwoman of superb physique, accompanied by her guardian aunt, Mrs. Nunn, arrives at Nevis to spend the winter. Mrs. Nunn, a worldly woman, is desirous of marrying her niece to a suitable *parti*. Anne meets Lord Hunsdon, a serious young man of unblemished character, who is favorably impressed. She hears a discussion regarding Byam Warner, a native poet of Nevis, whose poems have astonished the world, but who, because of an unfortunate love-affair, has surrendered to dissipation and become a social outcast. Anne has fervently read Warner's poems, and believes her soul mated to that of the genius. During a walk with Anne, Lord Hunsdon discloses a plan to reform his friend, Byam Warner. The poet is invited by Lady Hunsdon, Lord Hunsdon's mother, to a social gathering at Bath House, where Anne meets him for the first time. They seem enraptured with each other. The following evening, during a walk, Anne unconsciously finds herself opposite the poet's house. She is about to hurry away when the poet himself appears and accompanies her home. In reminiscent mood the poet reviews his shattered life, and realizes that with a woman of Anne Percy's character he might have been saved. Lord Hunsdon visits Warner, apprises him of his affection for Anne Percy, and requests him to write a sonnet to his lady-love, that he may present it in his own name. The poet complies, and Lord Hunsdon invites him to make his home with them after the marriage in contemplation by his lordship.

PART II

LORD HUNSDON had already bought an album in Charles-town, and after copying the sonnet several times to practise his chirography, he inscribed it upon the first page—a pink one—signing it "Your most obedient Hunsdon," with an austere flourish. Then he carefully wrapped the album in tissue paper and sent it to Anne's room, with strict orders to his man not to leave it unless she were quite alone. The best of men have their vanities; the idea that the superior Mary Denbigh or the satirical Miss Bargarny might witness the offering's arrival was insupportable.

Anne was alone and unfolded the large square package with much curiosity. It was one of those albums that the young ladies of her day loved to possess; indeed, so far, she had been

the only girl in Bath House without one, and had read the flattering verses in several with some envy. This tribute was sumptuously bound in brown calf embossed with gold, and all the leaves were delicately tinted. She turned over the pale greens and pinks, blues and canaries, with that subtle, indefinable pleasure that color gives to certain temperaments. She had not glanced at the servant, and fancied the album a present from Lady Constance. When she saw the signature on the first page she stared, for Lord Hunsdon was the last person she would have suspected of cultivating the muse. She began the sonnet with a ripple of laughter, but paled before she finished. Trifling as it was she recognized it as the work of Byam Warner. She could never be mistaken there. It resembled nothing

of his that she knew, but the grace of the verse, the fine instinctive choice of words, the glitter or sweep of phrase, belonged to him and none other. Her heart leaped as she wondered if it were not the first bit of verse he had ever written while sober. And she had inspired it! The thought brought another in its train and she went suddenly to her window and stared through the jealousies at the dazzling sunlight on the palms, for the first time seeing nothing of the beauty of Nevis.

The poem had been written to her. A phrase or two not intended for Hunsdon's unsuspecting eye assured her of that. It was not an old sonnet furnished up to fit the purpose of a friend. And fragile as the thing was, still it was poetry—and he had written it when sober—and to her—

She repeated this discovery many times before she could give shape to the greater thought building in her brain. It was a beginning, a milestone. Might it not be within her compass to influence him so indelibly that his muse would continue to wake at her call, at the mere thought of her, with no aid from that foul hag of drink, which of late had almost made her hate his poetry as the work of a base alliance? She believed that if he did not love her he was yet so deep in admiration that she could inspire him with a profound attachment if she chose. And the result? If only she were a seer, as certain of her Scotch kin claimed to be! A hopeless love might inspire him to the greater work the world expected of him; she had read of the flowering of genius in the strong soil of misery. But he had suffered enough already, poor devil! The result of loving for the last time, with no hope of possession, might fling him from Parnassus into the Inferno, where he would roast in unproductive torment for the rest of his mortal span. Even that might not be for long. He looked frail enough beside these fresh young English sportsmen, or even the high-colored planters burnt without and within.

It was a terrible question for any woman to be forced to ask, particularly

were she honest enough to confess that no woman should ask it. What right had she to put her finger into any man's destiny unless she were willing to take the consequences and share that destiny if invited? But that no woman could be expected to do. Why could he not have realized her mental picture of him: that glorified being with whom she had dwelt so long? She sighed as she recalled her many disillusionments of the past few weeks. Bath House was the world in little. It seemed years since she had left Warkworth Manor. She found that world a somewhat mean and sordid place. She still loved the gaiety and sumptuousness of her new life, it appealed to inherited instincts. But she had not found a responsive spirit. The young married women were absorbed in their children or their flirtations. The girls were superficially read, "accomplished," conceited, insincere, with not an aspiration above getting a husband of fortune. Lady Mary, alarmed at last, was become cool and spiteful. Lady Hunsdon was almost an enemy. Lady Constance seemed to have more heart than most of her ilk in spite of her caustic tongue, but she hardly made a sympathetic companion for a romantic young girl brought up in the country. It was true that she had recently made an interesting acquaintance in Miss Medora Ogilvy, the clever daughter of one of the planters, who vowed she loved her and swore undying friendship; but Anne needed more time to reciprocate feelings so ardent, particularly in her present state of mind.

On the whole she liked the young men better, as they were less spiteful and petty, but they had read little and the only subject of which, barring sport and society, they had any real knowledge, was politics, and this they vowed too fatiguing for the tropics. They preferred the language of compliment, they loved to dawdle, to hold a skein of worsted, to read a novel aloud or "The Yellowplush Papers" or selections from "Boz"; when tired of female society, or when it was too hot to hunt or fish, they retired to the gam-

ing tables. Anne had never dreamed that the genus man could be so little stirring, and although she was flattered by their attentions, particularly by those of Mr. Abergenny, and her natural coquetry was often responsive, for mere youth must have its way, she was appalled by her general sense of disappointment and wondered what her future was to be. She had no desire to return to her manor, and for a season in London she cared as little. She would have been glad to remain on Nevis, but to this she knew that Mrs. Nunn would not harken. London was inevitable; and possibly she would meet some intelligent and interesting man who would help her to bury romance and fulfil the proper destiny of woman.

She wondered today, as she had wondered once or twice before, could she have loved Byam Warner in spite of his unlikeness to her exaggerated ideal had she found him a normal member of society, as fine in appearance as his years and his original endowment deserved. It was a question to which she could find no answer, but certainly his conversation, could she but permit herself to enjoy it, must be far superior to that of anyone else on Nevis. And a flirtation with the poet of the day would have been exciting, something to remember, a feather in her cap. She had her share of feminine vanity—it grew daily, she fancied—and it was by no means unfed by the manifest admiration, possibly love, of this great poet in his ruin. Whatever his tribute might be worth, it was offered to none but herself, and if the man were beneath consideration the poet was of a radiance undimmed.

Suddenly it occurred to her that did he tread his present straight and hygienic path for a full year he might indeed be his old self when next she came to Nevis. The island was healthy at all seasons, those who lived on it were immune from fever. Nature would re-make what Warner had unmade too early to have destroyed root and sap. Many a man had sown his wild oats and lived to a hale old age.

Would that mean that next winter Byam Warner would be handsome, attractive, confident? She often heard the good looks of his youth referred to, and there certainly were the remains of beauty in that wrecked countenance. His eyes were sunken, but they were still of a deep black-gray and they daily gained in brightness. His hair was almost black, and abundant. The shape of his head and brow and profile were above reproach, for dissipation had never grossened him. But his face, although improving, was still haggard and lined and stamped with satiety; his mouth betrayed the wild passions that had wrecked him, and was often drawn in lines of bitterness and disgust. There was nothing commanding in his carriage, such as women love, and his manners were too reserved, too shy, to fascinate her sex apart from the halo of his fame. A return to health and vigor might improve him vastly, but nothing could ever make him a dashing, romantic figure; and although sometimes a light came into his face that revealed the poet, commonly he betrayed not an inkling of his gifts. But even so he might be more worth while than any man she had met so far, whatever the great world might have in store; and she wished that his reformation had been accomplished the winter before and she were now in enjoyment of the result. Then she found distaste in the thought that she might have had no hand in his reclamation, and was glad to recall his hint that but for her he would never have crossed the threshold of Bath House. And then she was overwhelmed with the sense of her responsibility. It was not for the first time, but not until today had she faced the question of how far she ought to go. And even today she did not feel up to reasoning it out. She knew too little of the world, of men; there was no one to whom she could go for advice. She re-read the sonnet, determined to be guided by events, registered a vow that in no case would she shirk what she might believe to be her duty; and then wrote a prim little note of acknowledgment to Lord Hunsdon.

II

LADY HUNSDON, having in vain besought the poet to read aloud to a select audience, acted upon the hint he had unwittingly dropped to Anne Percy and organized a charity performance for the benefit of an island recently devastated by earthquakes. Warner was visibly out of countenance when gaily reminded by Anne of his careless words, but he could do no less than comply, for the wretched victims were in want of bread. Lady Mary, Miss Bargarny, and several others offered their services. All aristocratic Nevis was invited to contribute its presence and the price of a ticket, and the performance would end with a dance that should outlast the night.

Nevis was in a great flutter of excitement, partly because of the promised ball, for which the military band of St. Kitts was engaged, partly because only a favored few, and years ago, had heard Byam Warner read. Indeed, his low voice was never heard three yards away in a drawing-room, although it had frequently made Charlestown ring. He was now on his old footing in the Great Houses. The nobler felt many a pang of conscience that they had permitted a stranger at Bath House to accomplish a work so manifestly their own, while others dared not be stigmatized as provincial, prejudiced, middle-class. If London could afford a superb indifference to the mere social offenses of a great poet, well, so could Nevis. They forgot that London had arisen as one man and flung him out neck and crop. Lady Hunsdon had eclipsed London; rather for the nonce did she epitomize it. Her gowns came not even from Bond Street. They were confected in Paris. Hers was the most distinguished Tory *salon* in London. Her son was the golden fish for which all maidens fortunate enough to be within reach of the sacred pond angled. It was whispered that Warner would accompany Hunsdon to London, be a guest in his several stately homes, possibly be returned from one of his numerous boroughs. The poet

approached his zenith for the second time. Curricles, phaetons, gigs, britzskas, barouches, family chaises, brought the elect of Nevis and their guests from St. Kitts to Bath House a little before nine o'clock; the lowly of Charlestown to the terrace before the ever-open windows of the saloon where the performance was to be held. In the friendly bedrooms of the hotel there was a great shaking down of skirts, rearranging of tresses. Miss Medora Ogilvy went straight to Anne's room, by invitation, and finding it empty, proceeded to beautify herself. Byron had been much in vogue at the time of her birth—was yet, for that matter—and she had been named romantically. But there was little romance in the shrewd brain of Miss Ogilvy. She was well educated and accomplished—like many of her kind she had gone to school in England; she could cook and manage even West Indian servants—her mother was an invalid; and she wished for nothing under heaven but to marry a man of "elegant fortune" and turn her back upon Nevis forever. She really liked Anne and thought her quite the most admirable girl she had ever met, but she was not of those that deceive themselves, and frankly admitted that the chief attraction of her new friend was her almost constant proximity to Lord Hunsdon.

Miss Ogilvy was petite, with excellent features and slanting black eyes that gave her countenance a slightly Oriental cast. She wore her black hair in smooth bands over her ears, *à la Victoria*, and her complexion was as transparently white as only a West Indian's can be. Tonight she pirouetted before the pier-glass with much complacency. She wore a full flowing skirt of pink satin, with little flounces of lace and rosettes on the front, puffed tight sleeves and a corsage of white illusion, pink bands, flowers and rosettes. As she settled a wreath of pink rosebuds on her head and wriggled her shoulders still higher above her bodice, she felt disposed to hum a tune. She was but nineteen and Lady Mary was twenty-nine if she was a day.

Anne, who had been assisting Mrs. Nunn's maid to adjust lavender satin folds and the best point lace shawl, entered at the moment and was greeted with rapture.

"Dearest Miss Percy! What a vision! A Nereid! A Lorelei! You will extinguish us all. Poor Lord Hunsdon! Poor Mr. Warner—ah, *ma belle*, I have eyes in my head! But what a joy to see you in color. How does it happen?"

"My aunt insisted while we were in London that I buy one or two colored gowns. My father has been dead more than a year. I put this on tonight to please her, although I have two white evening gowns."

She wore green taffeta flowing open in front over a white embroidered muslin slip, and trimmed with white fringe. A sash whose fringed ends hung down in front girt her small waist. Her arms and neck were bare, but slipping from the shoulders, carelessly held in the fashion of the day, was a white crêpe scarf fringed with green. She wore her hair in the usual bunch of curls on either side of her face, but in a higher knot than usual, and had bound her head with the golden fillet Mrs. Nunn had pressed upon her in London. Depending from it and resting on her forehead was an oblong emerald; Anne had a few family jewels, although she wore only these to-night.

"I vow!" continued Miss Ogilvy, tripping about her, "quite classic! And at the same time such style! Such *ton*! Madame Lucille made that gown. Am I not right?"

Anne confessed that Madame Céleste had made it.

"Céleste I meant. How could I be so stupid? But it is two long years since I laid eyes on Bond Street. A humbler person, plain Mrs. Barclay, sends out my gowns. What do you think, dear Miss Percy, shall I look provincial, second-rate, among all these lucky people of fashion?"

"You are lovely and your gown is quite perfect," said Anne warmly, and then the two girls went downstairs arm

in arm, vowing eternal friendship. Miss Ogilvy professed a deep interest in the poet, declared that she had begged her obdurate papa, time and again, to call upon and reclaim him; and Anne, who now detested Lady Mary, was resolved to further her new friend's interests with Lord Hunsdon. He joined them at the foot of the staircase and escorted them to a little inner balcony above the saloon. There was no danger of interference from Lady Mary, who was to perform, or from Lady Hunsdon, who occupied the chair of state in the front row.

They were late and looked down upon a brilliant scene. Not even a dowager wore black, and the young women, married and single, were in every hue, primary and intermediate. Almost as many wore their hair *à la Victoria* as in the more becoming curls, for loyalty, so long dead and forgotten, was become the rage since the young Queen had raised the corpse. But they softened the severity of the coiffure with wreaths and feathers and fillets and even coquettish little lace caps filled with flowers. The men were equally fine in modish coats and satin waistcoats, narrow and severe, or deep, ruffled neckties, but one degree removed from the stock, or in flowing collars *à la Byron*. Their hair was parted in the middle and puffed out at the side; not a few wore a flat band of whisker that looked like the strap of the condemned. Both Hunsdon and Warner shaved, or Anne would have tolerated neither.

There was a platform at the end of the saloon, with curtains at the back separating it from a small withdrawing-room, and it had been tastefully embellished with rugs, jars of gorgeous flowers, a reading-stand, a harp and a piano.

"Who will sway over the harp?" asked Miss Ogilvy humorously.

"Lady Mary. Ah! They are about to begin."

A fine applause greeted Miss Bargamy, who executed the overture to *Semiramide* quite as well as it deserved. After the clapping was over and she

had obligingly given an encore, she remained at the piano, and Mr. Stewart, a young man with red hair and complexion, in kilts and pink knees, emerged from the curtains and sang in a thundering voice several of Burns's tenderest songs. After their final retirement the curtains were drawn apart with much dignity, and Lady Mary stepped forth, a vision, as her severest critics were forced to admit. She was in diaphanous white, with frosted flowers amid her golden ringlets, a little crown of stars above her brow, and a scarf of silver tissue.

"All she needs is wings!" exclaimed Miss Ogilvy, and added to herself, "May she soon get them!"

Lady Mary, acknowledging the rapturous greeting with a seraphic expression and the grand air, literally floated to the harp, where nothing could have displayed to a greater advantage her long, willowy figure, her long, white, thin arms, the drooping gold of her ringlets. As the golden music tinkled from the tips of her taper fingers—formed for the harp, which may have had somewhat to do with her choice of instrument—her ethereal loveliness swayed in unison, and, one might fancy—if not a rival—that it emitted a music of its own.

"She doesn't look a day over twenty!" exclaimed Miss Ogilvy. "Who would dream that she is thirty? But those fragile creatures break all at once. When she does fade she will be even more *passée* than most."

"But women know so many arts nowadays," said Anne drily. "And she would be the last to ignore them."

"Ah! no doubt she will hang on till she gets a husband. I never knew anyone to want one so badly."

"Lady Mary?" asked Hunsdon wonderingly. "I had long since grown to look upon her as a confirmed old maid."

"La, la, my lord!" Miss Ogilvy suddenly resolved upon a bold stroke. "She's trying with all her might and main to marry your own most intimate friend."

"My most intimate friend? He is in England. Nottingdale. Do you know him? Or do you perchance mean Warner?"

"Never heard of the first and it certainly is not the last. Oh, my lord!" And then she laughed so archly that poor Lord Hunsdon could not fail to read her meaning. His freshly colored face, warm with ascending heat, turned a deep brick-red. He felt offended with both Miss Ogilvy and Lady Mary, and edged closer to Anne as if for protection.

This conversation took place while Lady Mary was bowing in response to the plaudits her performance evoked. She tinkled out another selection, and then, with a gently dissenting gesture, the dreaming eyes almost somnambulistic, floated through the curtains.

There was a brief interval for rapturous vocatives and then the curtains were flung apart and Spring burst through, crying:

"I come! I come! Ye have called me long!
I come o'er the mountains with light and song!

Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening
earth

By the winds that tell of the violet's birth."

The young lady, attired in white and hung with garlands, looked not unlike the engraving of "Spring" in the illustrated editions of the poems of the gentle Felicia. For a moment Anne, who had long outgrown Mrs. Hemans, was disposed to laugh, but as the sweet, ecstatic voice trilled on, a wave of sadness swept over her, a familiar scene of her childhood rose and effaced the one beneath. She saw the favorite room of her mother in the tower overhanging the sea, her brothers sprawled on the hearthrug, herself in her own little chair, her mother in her deep invalid sofa holding her youngest child in her arms, while she softly recited the "Evening Prayer at a Girls' School," "The Coronation of Inez del Castro," "Juana"; or, to please the more robust taste of the boys, "Bernardo del Carpio" and "Casabianca," the last two in sweet, inadequate tones.

Lines, long forgotten, swept back to Anne out of the past:

The night wind shook the tapestry round an ancient palace room,
And torches, as it rose and fell, waved through the gorgeous gloom.

There was music on the midnight—
From a royal fane it rolled.

The warrior bowed his crested head, and tamed his heart of fire,
And sued the haughty king to free his long imprisoned sire.

Mrs. Percy had been a gentle, sentimental, romantic creature with golden ringlets and floating, sylph-like form, not unlike Lady Mary's. She received little attention from her scientific husband and devoted her short life to her children and to poetry, writing graceful, vacant verses herself. Mrs. Hemans was her favorite poet, although her eyes could kindle when she read "The Corsair" or "The Bride of Abydos," particularly as she had once met Byron and remembered him as the handsomest of mortals. But she would have thought it indecorous even to mention his name before her young children. Mrs. Hemans was as much a part of the evening hour in winter as the dusk and the blazing logs, and the children loved her almost as well as the gentle being who renewed her girlhood in those romantic effusions. A malignant fever, raging up the coast, had burnt out that scene forever, leaving Anne alone and aghast, while her father, the first horror and remorse over, subsided once more into his laboratory. Then had come a succession of governesses; and finally the library was discovered, and she ceased to miss her old companions. But she never forgot them, and no doubt the sweetness and melancholy of the memory did as much as the imaginary Byam Warner to save her from the fate of her dry, dehumanized father.

Anne came to herself as a charade progressed, and Miss Ogilvy gaily commented upon the interpretation of the second syllable of Caterpillar, as A, in the presentation of which one of the handsomest girls and her swain made

a striking silhouette. Then she remembered that the next name on the programme was Warner's; he was to read for half an hour from his own work, and then all would hie themselves to the music-room and dance.

There was a longer interval than usual. Anne's hands and feet became nerveless bits of ice. Had his courage given out? Had he run away? Worse still, was he nerving himself to an ordeal to which he would prove unequal? A humiliating breakdown! Anne's blood pounded through her body as he finally emerged from the curtains, and she broke her fan, much to the amusement of Miss Ogilvy.

The company, although it had once or twice permitted its applause to go beyond the bounds prescribed by elegant civility, had reserved its real enthusiasm for the poet whose halo of present fashion electrified their springs of Christianity. As he entered, correctly attired, although more soberly than most of his audience, and walked slowly to the reading-stand, they not only clapped, but stamped and cried his name till the walls resounded, and so excited the colored people (with whom his popularity had never waned) that a stentorian chorus burst through the windows and drowned the more polite if no less ardent greeting of the elect.

Warner blushed faintly and bent his head in acknowledgment, but otherwise gave no sign of the astonishment he must feel, and stood quite still until the noise had died away, down to its final echo in the neighborhood of the palm avenue. When he finally lifted his book a sudden breathless silence fell upon the company. Anne leaned over the railing in almost uncontrollable excitement, her face white, her breath short. Lord Hunsdon was too agitated himself to observe her, but the unaffected Miss Ogilvy took note and matured plans.

Warner began to read in his low, toneless, but distinct voice. In a few moments the excitement subsided; he was pronounced insufferably monotonous. Fans rustled, hoops scraped the

hard floors. Lady Constance gave a loud admonitory cough. Warner paid no heed. Still he read on in low monotone. A few moments more and its spell had enmeshed the company. The silence was so deep that the low murmur of the sea could be heard beyond (or within) his own voice. The most impatient, the most vehement, raised significant eyebrows and shot out optical affirmations that nothing could be more effective than the verbal method the poet had adopted—although doubtless it was quite his own, so in keeping was it with his reserved, retiring, non-committal personality. Be that as it may, the dramatic scenes, the impassioned phrases, the virile, original vocabulary that flowed from his set lips could never be delivered so potently by tones that matched their tenor. The contrast flung them into undreamed of relief. Those most familiar with his work wondered that they had never understood it before.

Anne felt more than all this. She closed her eyes and enjoyed a delusion. It was the soul of the poet reading. The body there was but a fallacy of vision, non-existent, really dead, perhaps; subserved for a while longer by that imperious immortal part that had not yet fulfilled its earthly mission. She had allowed herself to believe that she had caught fleeting glimpses of this man's soul, so different from his battered clay; tonight she heard it, and heard as she never did by the North Sea when all her world was one vast delusion. It murmured like the sea itself, the gray, cold sea of some strange dark planet beyond the stars, whence came—who knew?—all genius; a sea whose tides would rise high and higher until they exhausted the clay they beat upon while they had yet a message to deliver to Earth. That clay! If it could but be preserved a few years longer! Great as was his accomplished work, he must do greater yet. No student of his more ambitious poems, half lyric, half dramatic, believed his powers were yet developed.

Anne came to herself amid a new thunder of applause. She told herself

with a sigh and an angry blush that she was a romantic idiot and the sooner she married and had a little family to think of the better. Heaven knew what folly she might be capable of did she give rein to dreams. She became aware that Warner, compelled to silence, was looking straight at her, and she automatically beat her hands together. He smiled slightly and gave his head an almost imperceptible shake. Then someone in the audience called for the popular poem in which he had so vigorously denounced Macaulay's unjust estimate of Byron a few years since, holding up to scorn the brain of the mere man of letters who dared to criticize or even to attempt to understand the abnormal brain and temperament of a great poet. He recited it from memory and then retired, followed by a tumult of approval that he well knew he never should evoke again.

III

WHEN Anne descended, the company was streaming toward the music-room, whence issued the rich summons of a full military band. She maneuvered so well that Lord Hunsdon led out Miss Ogilvy for the first dance, and then she sat down beside Mrs. Nunn, hoping that Warner would summon courage to take the empty chair beside her. Her pulses beat high with excitement and delight in his triumph, and she longed to show him recklessly for once the admiration and the faith she had taken care to conceal under a correctly flattering manner. But Warner stood talking with a group of men, and even could he have ignored a sudden, imperious beckoning of Lady Hunsdon's fan, he would have been too late. With one of those concerted impulses to which men no less than women are subject, the young bloods of Bath House, the moment they saw Anne Percy radiant in color, with an even deeper blush and brighter eyes than usual, determined that she and she alone should be the belle of the evening. She had hardly seated herself when she was surrounded, she

was besieged for dances; and in spite of her protests that she had never danced save with her governesses, she found herself whirling about the room in the arms of Mr. Abergenny, and followed by many an angry eye. Abergenny might be untitled and less of a "catch" than Lord Hunsdon, but he had far more dash, manner and address; he possessed a fine property, if somewhat impaired by high living, and was a man of note and fashion in London. His word alone had stamped more than one ambitious beauty for good or ill, and this was not the first time that he had intimated his entire approval of Miss Percy. Anne guessed that his intentions were never serious, but he had amused her more than the others, and since she must know the world, doubtless she should be grateful for tutelage so able.

Although trembling and suffused with terrified blushes, all her old shyness in possession, Mr. Abergenny was so admirable a partner, he gave her so many courteous hints, he kept her so persistently in the thick of the dancing, where critical eyes could hardly follow her, that her confidence not only returned, but before she had completed the circuit of the room three times she was vastly enjoying herself. She danced round and square dances with her various admirers for the next hour, and when the country dance was at its height she found herself tripping alone between the long files with no return of bashfulness and no less grace than Lady Mary herself; forgetting that there could be no better preparation for grace in the ball-room than years of free exercise out of doors.

She abandoned herself to the new and unanticipated pleasure, not only of dancing, but of being the acknowledged belle of the night. Beyond the intoxication of the moment nothing existed. Once, indeed, she met Warner's eyes, and they flashed with surprise and rage, but she forgot him and danced until even her strong frame could stand no more, and she went to bed with the dawn and slept till afternoon.

IV

DEPRESSED with reaction and heavy with unwonted sleeping by daylight, she was glad to go from her dressing-table to the carriage waiting to take herself and her aunt for the customary drive. It was but a moment before her mind was startled into its accustomed activity.

"Mr. Warner has disappeared again." Mrs. Nunn tilted her lace parasol against the slanting sun. "Poor Maria!"

"Disappeared?"

"That is the general interpretation. Maria, with whom he was to dine to-night, received a note from him this morning asking to be excused, as he was going away for some time; and when Hunsdon rushed down to Hamilton House—unshaved and without his plunge—he was told that the poet was gone, none of the servants could say where nor when he would return. So that is probably the last of the reformed poet. I suppose last night's excitement proved too much for him."

Anne's heart beat furiously, but she forced her tone into the register which Miss Bargany and her kind would employ to express lively, detached regret:

"That would be quite dreadful, and most ungrateful. But I do not believe—anything of the sort. No doubt all that reading of his own work stirred his muse and he has shut himself up to write."

"Well, as he always shuts himself up with a quart of brandy at the same time, that is equally the end of him as far as we are concerned. For my part I have never been able to make out what all of you find in him to admire. He would be quite ordinary to look at if it were not for a few good lines, and I never heard him utter a remark worth listening to. And as for fashion! Compare him last night with Lord Hunsdon or Mr. Abergenny!"

"I think myself he made a mistake not to appear in a rolling collar and a Turkish coat and turban! I don't fancy that he emulates Lord Hunsdon or Mr. Abergenny in anything."

"At least not in devotion to you, so you will not miss him. And you have nothing to regret, if he *was* the fashion—thanks to Maria—for awhile; a young girl should never suffer detrimental to hang about her. Which of your beaux do you fancy most?" she demanded in a tone elaborately playful.

"Which? Oh, Lord Hunsdon is the better man, and Mr. Abergenny the better beau."

"I don't fancy that Mr. Abergenny's attentions are ever very serious," said Mrs. Nunn musingly. "He certainly could make any young lady the fashion, but he is fickle and must marry fortune. But Hunsdon—he is quite independent, and as steady as—" She glanced about in search of a simile, remembered West Indian earthquakes and added lamely, "as the Prince Consort himself." Then she felt that the inspiration had been a happy one, and continued with more animation than was her wont: "You know they are really friendly."

"Who?"

"The Prince Consort and Hunsdon. It is almost an intimacy."

"Why not? I suppose a prince must have friends like other people, and there are not many of his rank in England. I do not see how the Prince Consort could do better than Hunsdon. The Queen certainly must approve."

"I am glad you so warmly commend Hunsdon. I have the highest respect for him myself—the very greatest."

"If you mean that you wish me to marry him, Aunt Emily—have you ever reflected that it might cool your friendship with Lady Hunsdon? She does not like me and I am sure would oppose the match. I may add, however, that Lord Hunsdon has so far made no attempt to address me."

"I don't fancy you are more blind than everybody else in Bath House. I am gratified, indeed, to see that you are not. You are mistaken in thinking that your marriage with Hunsdon would affect my friendship with Maria. It is true that she has conceived the notion that you have an independent spirit, and is in favor of Mary Denbigh at present;

but she is too much a woman of the world not to accept the inevitable. And we have been friends for five-and-forty years. She could not get along without me. I have not been idle in this matter. I sing your praises to her, assure her that you have never crossed my will in anything. Last night I told her how sweetly you had submitted to buying that colored gown and wearing that fillet—it becomes you marvelously well. I have also told her what a tractable daughter you were."

"I couldn't help myself. I had not a penny of my own—"

"One of the unwritten laws of the world you now live in is to tell the least of all you know. The fact remains. You *were* tractable—submissive. You never made a scene for poor Harold in your life."

"He wouldn't have known if I had."

"Well, well, I am sure you are submissive and always will be when your interest demands it. I admire a certain amount of spirit, and your difference from all these other girls, whatever it is, makes you very attractive to the young men. Abergenny says that you are an out-of-door goddess, which I think very pretty; but on the whole I prefer Hunsdon's protest: that you are the most womanly woman he ever set eyes on."

"It has more sense. I never read in any mythology of indoor goddesses. Opinion seems to differ, however. Lady Mary said to me yesterday: 'You are so masculine, dear Miss Percy. You make us all look the merest females!'"

"Mary Denbigh is a cat. You know she is a cat. She would give Maria many a scratch if she caught Hunsdon. But she will not. It is all in your own hands, my dear."

Anne did not make the hoped-for response. She did not even blush, and Mrs. Nunn continued, anxiety creeping into her voice: "You need never be much thrown with Maria. She would settle herself in the dower house, which is almost as fine as Hunsdon Towers. In town she has her own house in Grosvenor Square. Hunsdon House in Piccadilly—one of the greatest man-

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But she could not command the attention of her niece again, and permitting herself to conclude that the maiden was lost in a pleasing reverie, she subsided into silence, closed her eyes to the beauty of land and sea, and also declined into reverie: drowsy reverie, in which pictures of herself in all the glory of near kinship to a beautiful and wealthy young peeress were mixed with speculations upon her possible luck at cards that night. She had lost heavily of late and it was time for her to retrieve her fortunes.

At dinner and in the saloon later the talk was all of the poet's disappearance. Some held out for the known eccentricities of genius, others avowed themselves in favor of the theory that respectable society had risen to its surfeit the night before. The natural reaction had set in and he was enjoying himself once more in his own way and wondering that he had submitted to be bored so long. Anne went to bed, her mind a chaos of doubt and terror.

V

SHE would have overslept again had it not been for the faithful maid with her coffee. She sprang out of bed at once, a trifle disburdened by the thought of a long ramble alone in the early morning, and, postponing her swim in the tanks below until her return, dressed so hurriedly that had hats been in vogue hers no doubt would have gone on back foremost. She was feverishly afraid of being intercepted, although such a thing had never occurred, the other women being far too elegant to rise so early, and a proper sense of decorum forbidding the young men to offer their escort.

The sea had never been a stiller, hotter blue, the mountain more golden, the sky more like an opening rose. But she strode on, seeing nothing. Sleep had given her no rest and she was in a torment of spirit that was a new experience in her uneventful life. She

recalled the angry, astonished eyes of Warner as she danced with all the abandon of a girl at her first ball. No doubt he had thought her vain and frivolous, the average young lady at whose approach he fled when he could. No doubt he thought her in love with Abergenny, whose habit of turning female heads was well known to him, and upon whom she had certainly beamed good will. No doubt he had expected her to manage to pass him, knowing his diffidence, and offer her congratulations; whereas she had taken no notice of him whatever. No doubt—oh, no doubt!—he had rushed off in a fury of disappointment and disgust, and all the good work of the past weeks had been undone, all her plans of meeting him a year hence as handsome and fine a man as he had every right to be, were frustrated. She had for some time past detected signs that apathy was gradually relieving a naturally fine spirit of its heavy burden, that his weary indifference was giving place to a watchful alertness which, in spite of the old mask he continued to wear, occasionally manifested itself in a flash of the eye or a quiver of the nostril. Anne could not doubt that he loved her, inexperienced in such matters as she might be. However she may have kept him at a distance, her thoughts had seldom left him, and he had betrayed himself in a hundred ways.

Had she been half interested in Hunsdon or Abergenny and had they been so unreasonable as to rush off and disappear merely because she had enjoyed her first ball-room triumphs as any girl must, she would have been both derisive and angry at the liberty; but Warner inspired no such feminine ebullition. He was a great and sacred responsibility, one, moreover, that she had assumed voluntarily. That he had unexpectedly fallen in love with her but deepened this responsibility, and she had betrayed her trust, she had betrayed her trust!

She left the road suddenly and struck upward into one of the sheltered gorges, sat down in the shadow of the jungle and wept with the brief violence of a

tropical storm in summer. Relief was inevitable. When the paroxysm was over she found a shaded seat under a cocoanut tree and determined not to return to the hotel for breakfast, nor indeed until she felt herself able to endure the sight of mere people; and endeavored to expel all thought of Warner from her still tormented mind. In the distance she could see Monserrat and Antigua, gray blurs on the blue water, she could hear the singing of negroes in the cane-fields far away, but near her no living thing moved save the monkeys in the tree-tops, the blue butterflies, the jeweled humming-birds. On three sides of her was a dense growth of banana, cocoanut, and palm trees, cactus and a fragrant shrub covered with pink flowers. Almost overhanging her was the collar of forest about the cone, and the ever-faithful snow-white cloud that only left the brow of Nevis to creep down and embrace her by night. She took off her bonnet and wished, as she had rarely done before, that she might never leave this warm, fragrant, poetic land. It was made for such as she, whose whole nature was tuned to poetry and romance, even if denied the gift of expression—or of consummation! Why should she not remain here? She had some money, quite enough to rent or even build a little house in one of these high solitudes, where she could always look from her window and see the sapphire sea, that so marvelously changed to chrysoprase near the silver, palm-fringed shore, inhale these delicious scents and dream and dream in this caressing air. She hated the thought of London. The world had no real call for her. She wondered at her submission to the will of a woman who had not the least comprehension of her nature. On Nevis would she stay, live her own life, find happiness in beauty and solitude, since the highest happiness was not for her; and at this point she heard a step in the jungle.

She sprang to her feet startled, but even before the heavy leaves parted she knew that it was Warner. When he stood before her, he lifted his hat

politely and dropped it on the ground, and although he did not smile he certainly was sober.

The relief, the reaction, was so great that the blood rushed to Anne's brow, the tears to her eyes. She made no attempt to speak at once and he looked at her in silence. Perhaps it was the mountain solitude that gave his spirit greater freedom; perhaps it was merely the effect of the beneficial régime of the past two months; there might be another reason less easy of analysis; but she had never seen him so assured, so well, so much a man of his own world. His shoulders were quite straight, his carriage was quite erect, there was color in his face and his eyes were bright. Nor did the haunted, tormented expression she had so often seen there look out at her. These were the eyes of a man who had returned to his place among men. He looked young, buoyant.

She spoke finally. "I—we all thought—you disappeared so abruptly—*what* am I saying?"

"You believed that I had returned to the pit out of which you—you alone, mind you—had dragged me. You might have known me better."

"You should not put such a burden on me. You have character enough—"

"Oh, yes! I had character enough, but doubtless you noticed when you first met me that I had ceased to exercise it. I went to the dogs quite deliberately, and, with my enfeebled will and frame, I should have stayed there, had not you magnetized me into your presence, where I was forced to behave if I would remain. Later, for reasons both prosaic and sentimental, I remained without effort; I have never had any real love of spirits, although I loved their effect well enough."

"You must have loved that other that woman very much."

"She made a fool of me. There is always a time in a man's life when he can be made a complete ass, if the woman with the will to make an ass of him happens along coincidentally. I fancied myself sated with fame, tired of life, a remote and tragic figure

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among men—the trail of Byron is over us all. That was the moment for the great and fatal passion, and the woman was all that a malignant fate could devise; not only to inspire the passion, but to transform a frame of mind arbitrarily imagined into a sickening reality. From a romantic, solitary being I became a prosaic outcast. Nor could I recall anything in the world I had left worth the sacrifice of the magician that gave me brief spells of happiness and oblivion. Nobody pretended that it injured my work, and I remained in the pit."

"And your self-respect? You were satisfied? Oh, surely—you looked—when I first saw you—"

"I loathed myself, of course. My brain was unaffected, was it not? I abhorred my body, and would willingly have slashed it off could I have gone on writing without it. Either I compelled my soul to stand aside, or I was made on that plan—I cannot tell; but my inner life was never polluted by my visible madness. I have been vile, but I have never had a vile thought. I fancy you understand this. And when I am writing, my ego does not exist at all—my worst enemies have never accused me of the egoism common to poets. I have lived in another realm, where I have remembered nothing of this. Had it been otherwise, no doubt I should have ended it all long ago."

Anne had averted her eyes, caught in one of those inner crises where the faculties are almost suspended. She faltered out: "And after—when I come back next year, shall I find you like this?"

He paused so long before replying that she moved with uncontrollable excitement, and as she did so his eyes caught hers and held them.

The intensity of his gaze did not waver, but he said, unsteadily, until his own excitement mastered him: "I have assured myself again and again that I never should dare to tell you that I loved you; that I was not fit to approach you; that I must let you go, and try to live with the memory of you. But now I remember nothing but that

I love you. I can speak of what I have been, but I cannot recall it. I feel nothing but that I am a man in the restored vigor of youth in the presence of the woman I want. If love is egoistical then I am rampant this moment with egoism. If I could have the bliss of marrying you I never should return to the past even in thought. I am a poet no longer. I am nothing but a lover. I remember nothing, want nothing, but the perfection of human happiness I should find with you."

The words poured from his lips before he finished, and the trained monotony of his voice had gone to the winds. His face was violently flushed, his eyes flashing. "I dare!" he cried exultingly. "I dare! It would be heaven of a sort to have broken through those awful barriers even if you told me to go and never enter your presence again."

"I cannot do that! I cannot!" And then she flung her arms out from her deep, womanly figure with a gesture expressive as much of maternal yearning as of youthful and irresistible passion. "I will stay with you forever," she said.

VI

SEVERAL hours later Miss Ogilvy, who was riding slowly along the road after a call at Bath House, suddenly drew rein and stared at an approaching picture. She had a pretty taste in art, had Miss Medora, and had painted all her island friends. Never had she longed more than at this moment for palette and brush. A tall, supple figure was coming down the white road between the palms and the cane-fields, clad in white, the bonnet hanging on the arm, the sun making a golden web on the chestnut hair. Never had the Caribbean Sea looked so blue as this girl's eyes. Even her cheeks were as pink as the flowers in her belt. She seemed to float rather than walk, and about her head was a cloud of blue butterflies. Miss Ogilvy had seen Anne striding many a morning, and it was

the ethereal gait that challenged her attention as much as the beauty of the picture.

They were abreast in a moment, and although Miss Ogilvy prided herself upon the correctness of her deportment, she cried out impulsively and with no formal greeting: "What, in heaven's name, dear Anne, has happened? I never saw anyone look so beautiful—so—happy!"

"I am going to marry Byam Warner," said Anne.

Miss Ogilvy turned white. She had intended to scheme for this very result, but confronted with the fact, her better nature prevailed and she faltered out:

"Oh—oh—it is too great a risk! No woman should go as far as that. We are all willing to help him, but that you should be sacrificed—you—you of all—"

"I am not sacrificing myself. Do you fancy I am so great a fool as that? No—no—that is not the reason I shall marry him!"

"He certainly is a great poet and has improved vastly in appearance. I never should have believed it to be possible." The inevitable was working in Miss Ogilvy. "But Mrs. Nunn? All her friends? There will be dreadful scenes. Oh, Anne, dear, they will rush you off! They will never permit it."

"My aunt controls nothing but my property, and not the interest of that. If she refuses her consent I shall simply walk up to Fig Tree Church and marry Mr. Warner."

Miss Ogilvy recovered herself completely. "You will do nothing of the sort," she cried, warm with friendship and the prospect of figuring in the most sensational episode Nevis had known this many a year. "Come to me. Be my guest until the banns have been properly published, and marry from Ogilvy Grange. Everything must be *de rigueur*, or I should never forgive myself. And it would give me the greatest happiness, dear Anne. Mama and papa do everything I wish, and papa is one of Mr. Warner's father's oldest friends. Mrs. Nunn will not

consent. So promise that you will come to me."

"I am very grateful. I had not thought much about Aunt Emily's opposition, but no doubt she will turn me out of Bath House. You may see me at Ogilvy Grange tonight."

"Send one of the grooms with a note as soon as you have had the inevitable scene. I only hope the result will be that I send the coach for you to-day. I do hope you'll be happy. Why shouldn't you? Byam Warner would not be the first man to settle down in matrimony. But can you stand living your life on Nevis?"

"I should have wished to live here had I never met Byam Warner."

"Oh!—well—you are not to be pitied. I shall paint you while you are at the Grange, all in white—only in a smarter gown—in this setting, and with those blue butterflies circling about your head. You cannot imagine what a picture you made. What a pity I frightened them away. Now, mind you, write me at once."

She kissed her radiant friend with a sigh, doubting that even conquest of Lord Hunsdon would make herself look like a goddess, and rode on.

Anne went her way, even more slowly than before. She was in no haste to face Mrs. Nunn, and she would re-live the morning hours before other mere mortals scattered those precious images in her mind. Warner had taken her up to his hut, concealed in a hollow of the mountain and surrounded on all sides by the jungle; then, while she sat on the one chair the establishment boasted, he had cooked their breakfast, a palatable mess of rice and plantains, and the best of coffee. They had consumed it with great merriment under a banana tree, then washed the dishes in a brook. Afterward he had shaken down several young cocoanuts and they had pledged themselves in the green wine. Then they had returned to the shade and talked—what had they not talked about? Anne opened the sealed book of the past five years of which he had been hero. He read it with amazement and delight, but contrite that he had received no

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message from that turbulent young brain by the North Sea. But he atoned by confessing that he had recognized her as his own the moment he laid eyes on her; that she was all and more than he had once modeled in the mists of his brain. He demanded every detail of that long union, so imaginative and so real, and told Anne that never before had a poet had the fortune to meet a woman who was a sealed fountain of poetry, yet who revealed the sparkling flood by a method of her own with which no words could compete.

"And will you write my poems?" Anne had asked eagerly. But he had drawn down a broad leaf between his face and hers. "I told you that I was a poet no longer—merely a lover. To know absolute happiness in two forms in this world you must take them in turn. I shall write no more."

"Were you perfectly happy when you wrote?" asked Anne, a little jealously.

"Perfectly."

"I can almost understand it."

"I can no more express it than I have ever been able to tell in verse the half of what I blindly conceived."

"I should think that might have clouded your happiness."

"Yes—when a poem was revolving and seething in my distracted head. Never tempt me to write, for while the thing is gestating I am a brute, moody, irritable, unhappy. The whole poem seems to work itself out remorselessly before I can put pen to paper, and at the same time is enveloped in a mist. I catch glimpses like will-o'-the-wisps in a fog-bank, sudden visions of perfect form that seem to turn to grinning masks. It is maddening! But when the great moment arrives and I am at my desk I am the happiest man on earth."

By tacit consent the subject of the stimulants under which he had always written was ignored, as was that terrible chapter of his life which it was her blessed fortune to close. They had discussed the future, talked of practical things. He had told her that his house could be put in order while they

traveled among the islands, and that he made quite enough to support her properly if they lived on Nevis. She had three hundred a year and would have more did she consent to let the manor for a longer term, and he had assured her that hers was a fortune on Nevis outside of Bath House. They finally decided to marry at once that he might show her the other islands before the hurricane season began.

In spite of loitering Anne arrived at the hotel quite two hours before luncheon, and after divesting herself of a frock that would send Mrs. Nunn into hysterics if her news did not, she went to her aunt's room.

Mrs. Nunn, fresh from her sulphur bath, was reclining on a sofa in her large, cool room, where the jalousies were half closed, and dawdling over *Godey's Lady's Book*, a fashion magazine printed in the United States, which found great favor in her eyes.

"My dear Anne," she said languidly, "I suppose you breakfasted with Miss Ogilvy. La, la! You are more burnt than ever. Your face is quite red. And I would have you well bleached before the London season. Pray sit down. It affects my nerves to see you wander about like that."

Anne took a chair facing her aunt. "I did not breakfast with Miss Ogilvy. I have been talking to Mr. Warner all the morning."

"Heavens! what a waste of time, when you might have been talking to Hunsdon in the morning-room! It was quite empty. Maria has Mr. Warner in charge. I hope you have not been walking about with him. You know, I told you—"

"No one saw us. We talked up in one of the jungles."

"One of the jungles!" Mrs. Nunn sat up. "I never heard anything sound so horrid. Do you tell me that you have the habit of sitting in jungles—dear me!—with young gentlemen? I forbid you to go out again unattended."

"This was the first time."

"It assuredly will be the last."

"I think not. Mr. Warner has a

hut in the jungle and I am going to marry him."

"What—you—" And then as she met Anne's eyes she gave a piercing scream, and her maid rushed in. "The sal volatile!" she gasped. "The salts."

She fell back limp, and Anne, who was unaccustomed to the easy fainting of fine ladies, was terrified and administered the restoratives. But Mrs. Nunn may have been less time reviving than Anne fancied, for when she finally opened her eyes they were very hard and her features singularly composed.

"You may go, Claire," she said to the maid. "Return in an hour and pack my boxes. We leave by the packet tomorrow. Now," she added, turning to Anne, "I am prepared to talk to you. Only kindly remember, if you have anything further of a startling nature to communicate, that I am accustomed to less direct and brutal methods."

"I am sorry," said Anne humbly. Mrs. Nunn waved apology aside.

"Of course you know that I shall never give my consent. Are you determined to marry without it?"

"Yes."

"Your father all over. It was his expression of inhuman obstinacy in your eyes that gave me even more of a shock than your words. Many a time I endeavored to gain his consent to your visiting London, where you would have seen the world and been sensibly married by this time. Never under my earlier tutelage would you have made a fool of yourself. And you have used Hunsdon abominably ill."

"I have given him no encouragement whatever—"

"Do not argue. My nerves will not stand it. Now, this much I have the right to demand: You are of age, I cannot prevent your marrying this outcast, but you owe it to me as well as to yourself to return to London, be presented to Her Majesty and do a London season—"

"I never expect to leave the West Indies again, unless, to be sure, Mr. Warner should feel obliged to go to

London himself. If you sail tomorrow I shall go to Medora Ogilvy—"

"You have planned it all out!" shrieked Mrs. Nunn. Anne hastily poured out another dose of sal volatile.

"I met Medora on my way home. She fancied how you would take it and offered me shelter."

"I am gratified that my sense of propriety is so well known. You may go to her. I proclaim to the world that I wash my hands of the disgraceful affair by leaving tomorrow. Great God! What a victory for Maria Hunsdon! I believe she plotted it all along."

Then she plunged into worldly argument, abuse of Warner, awful pictures of the future. Finally Anne rose.

"I don't wish to do your nerves a real injury, so I shall leave you until you are calmer," she said.

"I never wish to see you again."

VII

MRS. NUNN, although she had talked with much heat, was still collected enough to console herself with the reflection that Anne would be terrified into sailing with her on the morrow; it was incomprehensible to her well-regulated mind that any young lady in her niece's position in life would consent to a scandal. To do her justice she had no wish to precipitate Anne into an act which she believed must be fatal to her happiness, and she trusted to further argument to persuade her to return to London if only for the trousseau. With her niece and the poet three thousand miles apart, she would answer for the result.

Nevertheless, she called in Lady Hunsdon and Lady Constance Mortlake, and fairly enjoyed the consternation visible upon the bright, satisfied countenance of her Maria. Lady Hunsdon, indeed, thought it a great pity that Anne had not spared her son by selecting one of the beaux of Bath House instead of the dissolute poet.

"It is quite a tragedy!" she said

with energy, "and I for one cannot permit it. I feel as if it were my fault—"

"It is," said Lady Constance.

"But is it? I am inclined to blame my son, as he brought me here to reform Mr. Warner—and that part of the work I take credit for—"

"Devil a bit. He never would have come to Bath House without Anne Percy as a bait. I have learned that he was several times seen staring through the windows of the saloon before he accepted your invitation."

"In that case he would have managed to meet her even had I not taken him in hand."

"Logical but doubtful. He had long since lost the entrée to Bath House and to all the Great Houses. Only you, worse luck, had the power to bring him into a circle where he was able to meet the girl."

"Then you must admit that I have done some good. Had he not been able to meet her he no doubt would have gone from bad to worse. I at least have been the medium in his reform, the necessary medium."

"I don't believe in reform."

"You were brought up at the court of George IV."

"So were you, and therefore should have more sense. Warner is temporarily set up. No doubt of that. He feels a new man and looks like one. No doubt he has sworn never to drink again and means it. But wait till the honeymoon has turned to green cheese. Wait till he begets another poem. Poets to my mind have neither more nor less than a rotten spot in the brain that breaks out periodically, as hidden diseases break out in the body. Look at poor Byron."

It was Lady Hunsdon's turn to be satiric. "Poor dear Byron must have had a row of rotten spots, one of which was always in eruption. One may judge not so much by his achievements as by his performances."

"Never mind!" cried Lady Constance, the color deepening in her pendulous cheeks streaked with purple. "He was the most beautiful mortal

that ever breathed and I was in love with him and am proud of it."

"I feel much more original that I was not—"

"Oh, dear friends!" cried Mrs. Nunn pathetically, "we have to do with a living poet—unhappily. Byron has been in Hucknall-Torkard church these twenty years. Do advise me."

"Stay and see it through," said Lady Constance. "I know love when I see it. It is so rare nowadays that it fairly wears a halo. By-and-bye it will be extinct on earth and then we shall be kneeling to St. Eros and St. Venus and forget all the naughty stories about them, just as we have forgotten the local gossip about the present saints. You cannot prevent this match. You cannot even postpone it. I regret it as much as you do, but I cannot help sympathizing with them. So young and so full of high and beautiful ideals. They will be happy for a time. Who knows? He really may be a new man. Maria can convince herself of anything she chooses; I feel disposed to take a leaf out of her book."

Mrs. Nunn set her lips, thrust her bust up and her chin out. She looked obstinate and felt implacable. "I go to-morrow. Upon that I am resolved. I should be criminal to encourage her—"

There was a tap at the door. A servant entered with a note.

"From Anne!" announced Mrs. Nunn. She dismissed the servant and read it aloud:

"DEAR AUNT EMILY:

"Miss Ogilvy has sent the coach for me, feeling sure that I had incurred your displeasure, and asking me to go at once to the Grange. I have no wish to leave you if you remain at Bath House, but if you are resolved upon going to-morrow, I shall accept her invitation. Will you not let me come in and say good-bye, dear aunt? Be sure that I am deeply grateful for all you have done for me and only wish that I might spare you so much pain.
ANNE."

Mrs. Nunn called in her maid and sent a verbal refusal to see her niece.

"I would have saved her if I could." She was now quite composed, in the full sense of duty done. "But it is imperative that I go to-morrow and an-

nounce aloud my disapproval of this unfortunate marriage. I shall renounce my guardianship of her property the day I return to London. I cannot save her, so I wash my hands."

"I shall stay for the wedding," said Lady Constance, "and all London may know it."

"It is my duty also to remain," said Lady Hunsdon, "and my son must be best man. But Emily is quite right to go."

VIII

ANNE, during the ensuing month, had her first experience of home life since childhood. Mrs. Ogilvy lay on a sofa in one of her great, cool rooms all day, but she made no complaint and diffused an atmosphere of peace and gentleness throughout the house. The younger children were pretty creatures, well trained by their English governess, and Mr. Ogilvy, richly colored by sun and port, spent much of his time on horseback; amiable at home when his will was not crossed. The large stone house, painted a dazzling white and surrounded by a grove of tropical trees, stood so high on the mountain that the garden terraces behind it finished at the entrance to the evergreen forest. It was fitted up with every Antillian luxury: fine mahogany furniture—the only wood that defied the boring of the West Indian worm—light cane chairs, polished floors of pitch pine, innumerable cabinets filled with bibelôts collected during many English visits, tables covered with newspapers and magazines, the least possible drapery, and a good library. In the garden was a pavilion enclosing a marble swimming tank. Plates of luscious fruits and cooling drinks were constantly passed about by the colored servants, who looked as if they had even less to do than their masters. Anne was given a large room at the top of the house from which she could see the water, the white road where the negro women, with great baskets on their heads and followed by their brood, passed the fine carriages from Bath House; and on

all sides, save above, the rich cane-fields. Byam Warner came to breakfast and remained to dinner.

Miss Ogilvy was in her element. To use her own expression, Nevis and Bath House were in an uproar. The unforeseen engagement following on the heels of the famous poet's transformation, the haughty departure of Mrs. Nunn and the manifest approval of Lady Hunsdon and Lady Constance, who called assiduously at the Grange, the distinguished ancestry and appearance of Miss Percy, and the fact that the wedding was to take place on the island instead of in London, combined to make a sensation such as Nevis had not known since the marriage of Nelson and Mrs. Nisbet in 1787. Strange memories of Byam Warner were dismissed. He was a great poet and Nevis's very own. Never had Nevis so loved Medora. The Grange overflowed with visitors every afternoon, the piano tinkled out dance music half the night.

It was quite a week before Lord Hunsdon called at the Grange, nor did Anne and Medora meet him, even when lunching at Bath House. But one morning he rode out, and after a few moments of constrained politeness in the drawing-room deliberately asked Anne to walk with him in the garden. She followed him with some apprehension. He was pale, his lips were more closely pressed, his eyes more round and burning than ever.

When they were beyond the range of Miss Medora's attentive eye, he began abruptly:

"I have not come here before, dear Miss Percy, because I had to conquer my selfish disappointment. You cannot fail to know what my own hopes were. But I have conquered and we shall never allude to the matter again. My friendship for Warner is now uppermost and it is of him I wish to speak."

"Yes? Yes?"

"Last night I sat late with him. He is full of hope, of youth—renewed youth must seem a wonderful possession to a man: we are so prone to let it slip by unheeded! Well, he is changed. I never hoped for half as

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much. He tells me that the demon has fled. He has never a sting of its tail. That may be because he never really craved drink save when writing—until these last years. It is this I wish to talk to you about. You have the most solemn responsibility that ever descended upon a woman: a beautiful soul, a beautiful mind in your keeping. If you ever relax your vigilance—ever love him less—

"I never shall."

"No," he said, with a sigh, "I don't fancy you will. But you must never leave him. He is not weak in one sense, but in loneliness he might turn to composition again, and there could be but one result."

"But if he had done without stimulant for a long while—was quite happy—well, do you not think I might be stimulant enough?" She laughed and blushed, but she brought it out.

Lord Hunsdon shook his head. "No, I do not believe that even you could work that miracle. I have known him since we were at Cambridge together, and I am convinced that there is some strange lack in that marvelous brain which renders his creative faculty helpless until fired by alcohol. If the human brain is a mystery how much more so is genius? Much is said and written, but we are none the wiser. But this peculiar fact I do know. The island records and traditions tell us that all his forefathers save one were abstemious, dignified, normal men, mentally active and important. But his grandfather, who spent the greater part of his time in London, was one of the most dissolute men of the Regency. He was a wit at court, a personal friend of the Prince Regent. There was no form of dissipation he did not cultivate, and he died of excess at a comparatively early age. By what would seem to be a special tinkering of the devil with the work of Almighty God those lusts have taken possession of one section of Byam Warner's brain only, diseased it, re-distributed its particles in a manner that has resulted in the abnormal faculty we call genius, but deprived it

of that final energy which would permit those great powers to find their outlet without artificial stimulant. These may be fanciful ideas, but they have become fixed in my mind, and I have come here today to ask you to make me a solemn promise."

"Yes?"

"That you will never permit him to write again. You are not the woman to loosen your hold on a man's strongest feelings when the novelty has passed. You can hold, influence him, forever. When you see signs of recurring life in that faculty, divert him and it will subside. He has fame enough. Nor do I think that he was ever untowardly ambitious. You—you can always persuade him to let the pen alone."

"But you make no allowance for those creative energies. They may still be very strong, demand their rights. That cry may in time be as irresistible as any of his more normal instincts."

"He has written enough," said Lord Hunsdon firmly. "He must rest on his laurels. You must persuade him that he cannot add to his fame. With feminine arts you will induce him to believe that it is best to let well alone."

"I have given little thought to all this—"

"But you will now! Give me your promise, dear Miss Percy, or I cannot leave this island in peace."

"But do you believe that Byam Warner will be content to settle down for the rest of his mortal life to an existence of mere domestic happiness?"

"By no means. He delights in literature, and although he is well read, there are tomes which not even a Bacon could master in one lifetime. Moreover, he should buy back his cane-fields. That would keep him much out of doors, as overseers are of little more worth than negroes." Then Lord Hunsdon had an inspiration. "Encourage him to write prose. There need be no fury of creation in that. The greater part of his mind is capable of accomplishing anything unassisted. Interest him in politics. He is a Tory and he

loves me. Remind him constantly of the Whig Inferno from which we have just emerged. I am sure he would write political pamphlets of incomparable influence. I have never heard Warner talk politics, but I don't doubt that his mind would illuminate that subject as it does everything else it touches. Fill the house with quarterlies and newspapers."

"He might write a political romance, after the pattern of Disraeli," said Anne, who wondered why Lord Hunsdon did not take to romantic composition himself.

"Oh, not fiction, not by any means. Work that requires the exercise of the merely intellectual powers, not that fatal creative-spot. But will you promise, Miss Percy? Will you permit me to make sure that you understand your solemn responsibility?"

He faced her, his eyes flashing with that fanatical fire that would have sent him to the stake three centuries earlier. They seemed to retreat, become minute, bore through her. Anne, whose mind was in confusion and not a little angered, stirred uneasily, but she replied in a calm, decided tone:

"I fully realize my responsibility. Make no doubt of that. I know what I have done, what I am undertaking. I shall live for him, never for myself. I promise you that, if you think the promise necessary."

"And you will never let him write another line of poetry?"

"Not if I believed it would do him more hurt than good."

"That is not enough," cried Hunsdon passionately. "You must be unconditional. One surrender and he is lost. If it were a mere case of brandy while he was writing—but you have not the least idea what it leads to. He is transformed, another man—not a man at all. And when he emerged, did he enter that horror again, he would loathe himself as he never did before. He would be without one shred of self-respect. I shudder to think what would be the final result."

"You will admit that as his wife I may find better opportunities to under-

stand that complicated nature than you have had."

"Will you not make me that promise?"

"I will only promise to be guided by my judgment, not by my feelings. I hear Byam's voice. After all, it is hardly fair to talk him over like this."

IX

HUNSDON did not give up the siege, and rode out daily, much to the satisfaction of Miss Ogilvy, to whom Anne contrived to turn him over. Lady Constance, who found Medora amusing, was still further amused by the subtle currents beneath the surface, blind only to the shrewd young Colonial's court of herself, and was finally inspired to invite her to London for the season. Miss Ogilvy, in her own way, was as happy as Anne. A younger sister was returning from England and could take over her duties at the Grange; Lady Mary, riding dashing about the island with the spirit of eighteen, was caught in a shower, neglected to change her garments at once, had a fever, and arose as yellow as a lemon; Medora was nineteen and as white as an amaryllis.

The day of the wedding arrived. Never was there such a ringing of bells, so splendid an array of equipages and gowns. Fig Tree Church could hardly hold the planters and their wives, the guests from Bath House, as well as those from St. Kitts, and the Byams and Warners that had sailed over from half a dozen islands. Outside, the churchyard, the road, the fields were crowded with the colored folk, humble or ambitious. Bonnets and parasols gave this dense throng the effect of a moving tropical garden, and if the women were too mindful of their new manners to shout as the Ogilvy coach rolled past containing the bride, hardly visible under clouds of tulle, the men set up a wild roar as they caught sight of Warner hastily approaching the rear of the church by a side path. Mr. Ogilvy gave the bride away, Lord Hunsdon was best man, and Medora the only

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bridesmaid. Anne had pleaded for a quiet wedding at the Grange, but to this her young hostess would not harken; and the festival was vastly to her credit, from the beautiful decorations of the chancel to the wedding breakfast at the Grange. Lord Hunsdon was much interested to learn that the dainty, varied and appetizing repast was ordered and partly cooked by the accomplished creature beside him—whose eyes certainly had a most attractive Oriental slant. It so happened that his lordship was deeply concerned with the Orient, and hoped that the cares of state, now that the Tories were well in power, would permit him to visit it.

The negroes were dined on a platform in one of the bare cane-fields, and danced afterward until the bridal party started for the beach before Charles-town; then all, high and low, followed in the wake of the bridal coach with its four horses decorated with white ribbons and driven by postilions. One of the wedding presents had been a fine little sloop, and in it Warner and his bride set off at four in the afternoon, almost the entire population of Nevis, white and black, crowding the sands and cheering good will.

That honeymoon among the islands was so replete with beauty and bliss and the fulfilment of every romantic and ardent dream, that when it finished it was almost a relief to Anne to adjust her faculties to the homely details of housekeeping. For two months they wandered amid that chain of enchanted islands set in a summer sea, the sympathetic trade-winds filling their sails and tempering the heat on shore. St. Thomas with its little city on three hills like a painted fairy tale; St. Croix with its old Spanish arcades and palm avenues; the red-roofed Dutch village in the green crater of St. Bartholomew, which shot straight out of the sea without a hand's width of shore; Antigua with its English landscapes and tropical hospitality; St. Lucia, looking like an exploded mountain chain that had caught the bright plains and forests of

another island while the earth was in its throes, green as a shattered emerald by day, flaming with the long torches of gigantic fireflies by night; St. Vincent with its smoking volcanoes and rich plantations; Martinique, that bit of old France, with its almost perpendicular flights of street-steps cut in the rock, lined with ancient houses; beautiful honey-colored women always passing up and down with tall jars or baskets on their stately heads; Dominica with its rugged mountains, roaring cataracts and brilliant verdure; Trinidad with its terrible cliffs, infinitely colored valleys, mountain masses, its groves of citron and hedges of scarlet hibiscus and white hydrangea, towns set in the green amphitheatres of gentle hills, impenetrable forests and lakes of boiling pitch: Warner and Anne lingered on all of them, climbed to the summits of volcanoes hidden in the clouds and gazed into awful craters evil of smell and resounding with the menace of deep, imprisoned, persistent tides; sailed on the quiet lake in the crater of Mt. Pelée; rode on creole ponies for days through scented, chromatic forests with serrated heights frowning above them, and companioned by birds as vivid as the flowers and as silent. There were no wild beasts, nothing to mar days and nights so heavy-laden with beauty that Anne wondered if the cold North existed on the same planet, and sometimes longed for the scent of English violets. In Trinidad they were entertained in great state by the most distinguished of Warner's relatives, a high official of the island. Anne wore for an evening the famous ring, and was nearly prostrated with excitement and the fear of losing it. If she had not been half drugged with happiness and the ineffable beauty which scarcely for a moment deserted her waking senses, she would have attempted to define the quiver of terror that crossed her nerves now and again; for life at white heat has been embolismal since the death of the gods. As to Warner, he who had written many poems now devoted himself to living one, and achieved a perfect success.

X

HAMILTON HOUSE had been repaired during their absence, without and within. It was not necessary to refurnish, for the fine old mansion was set thick with mahogany four-posters, settles, chests, tables and chairs—more stately than comfortable. They arrived without warning, but the servants, under the merciless driving of Mr. Ogilvy, had been on the alert for several days, and as the sloop was becalmed for two hours not three miles from shore, until the lagging evening breeze filled the sails, when Warner and Anne finally landed and were led in triumph to their home by some twenty of their friends, every room of the upper story was flooded with the light of wax candles set in long, polished globes, the crystal and silver of the wedding presents was on the great mahogany dining-table laden with the plenty of the tropics, muslin curtains fluttered in the evening wind, the pitch-pine floors shone like glass, and flowers were on every stand and table.

There was a very long and very gay dinner, and many more guests came during the evening. When the last of them had gone and Anne went to her own pink room, the only luxurious room in the house, she felt happier than even during the past enchanted weeks, for she was at home and the home was her own.

She had never been permitted to interfere with the ancient and admirable housekeeping at Warkworth Manor, but she discovered next morning that the spirit of the housewife was in her, and was far more exultant over her bunch of keys, her consultations with her major-domo, her struggles with the most worthless servants on earth, than she had ever been over her first doll or her first novel. The routine into which the young couple immediately settled was unique to both and had little of monotony in it. After their early walk Warner spent the morning in his library, where he had a large case of books, Hunsdon's wedding present, to consider. He resisted his

friend's proposition to write political pamphlets with the seriousness that rises from the deepest humor, but he loved to read and ponder, and his few hours of solitude were easily occupied with the lore of the centuries. After siesta they rode and called at one or other of the Great Houses, and every evening they were dined or dined others. Bath House was closed, but the island was always gay until the dead heat of summer came and hurricanes threatened but rarely thinned the heavy air, when, although tropical storms were frequent, the rain was as hot as the earth.

Even then Warner and Anne had a companionship of which they never tired, and there was a new interest in watching the torn Caribbean and the furious driving of the wind among the trees. They could always exercise on the long veranda, or play games within doors.

Then, for a time, this perfect state of bliss was threatened. Anne was thrown from her horse, frightened by a flash of lightning as, caught in a storm, they were riding full speed for home, and was in agony and peril for several days, confined to her bed for a fortnight longer. There were the best of doctors on so wealthy an island as Nevis, and she recovered completely, although forced to shroud not the least of her desires. But the wild despair of Warner while she was in danger, and his following devotion, his inspired ingenuity in diverting her during her term of sadness and protest, made her feel that to cherish disappointment even in her inmost soul would be flying in the face of Providence; her spirits struggled up to their normal high level and once more she was the happiest of women. It was another fortnight before she could leave the house, but the languor was a new and pleasant sensation and not unbecoming the weather. Warner read aloud instead of to himself, and they wondered that they had never discovered this firm, subtle link in comradeship before. The rainy summer is the winter of the tropics, and they felt the same delight in hiding

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themselves within their own four walls that others so often experience in a sterner clime when the elements forbid social intercourse.

XI

ANNE could never recall just when it was she discovered, or rather divined, that her husband was once more a dual being. A vague sense of change cohered into fact when she realized that for some time he had been reading aloud and pursuing an undercurrent of independent thought. His devotion increased, were that possible, but the time came when he no longer could conceal that he was often absent in mind and depressed in spirit. He took to long rambles in which she could not accompany him at that season while so far from robust, smilingly excusing himself by reminding her that being so much more vigorous than of old he needed a corresponding amount of exercise. There finally came an entire week when he was forced to remain indoors, so persistent were the torrential rains, and after the first two days he ceased even to pretend to read, but sat staring out of the window, with blank eyes and set lips, at the gray deluge beating down the palm trees. He came to the table and consumed his meals mechanically. Nor was he irritable. The gentleness of his nature seemed unaffected, but that his mental part seethed was apparent. If he was less the lover he clung to Anne as to a rock in mid-ocean, and if he would not talk he was uneasy when she left the room.

There was but one explanation, and he was becoming less the man and more the poet every day. He slept little and lost the spring of his gait. Anne was as convinced as Lord Hunsdon or Lady Constance that all geniuses were unsound of mind no matter how normal they might be while the creative faculty slept. Sleep it must, and no doubt this familiar of Warner's had been almost moribund owing to the extraordinary and unexpected change that had taken place in his life, and the new interest

that had held every faculty. This interest was no less alive, but it was no longer novel, and a ghost had risen in his brain clamoring for form and substance.

Anne wished that he would write the poem and have done with it. She had never for a moment demanded that he should sacrifice his career to her, and during the past months, having respected as much as she loved him, she had dismissed as a mere legend the belief held by his friends that he could not write without stimulant. And she loved the poet as much as she loved the man. Indeed it was the poet she had loved first, to whom she had owed a happiness during many lonely years almost as perfect as the man had given her. That he had no weakness for spirits was quite clear. There was always cognac and Madeira on the table in the living-room where they received the convivial planters, and she drank Canary herself at table. It was patent to her that he refrained from writing because he had voluntarily given her his word he would write no more, and that he had but to take pen in hand for the flood to burst. She did not broach the subject for some days, waiting for him to make an appeal of some sort, no matter how subtle, but toward the end of this stormy week, when he was looking more forlorn and haunted every moment, she suddenly determined to wait no longer.

They were standing at the window watching the moon fight its way amid torn black clouds and flinging glittering doles upon the black and swollen waters. She put her hand on his shoulder as a man might have done and said in a matter-of-fact tone:

"You want to write. You are quick with a new poem. That must be patent even to the servants. I wish you would write it."

He jerked up his shoulders as if to dislodge her hand, then recollected himself and put his arm about her.

"I never intend to write another poem," he said.

"That is nonsense. A poem must be much like a baby. If it is conceived

it must be born. Do you deny it is there?" tapping his forehead.

"When the devil takes possession it is better to stifle him before he grows to his full strength."

"You are unjust to speak in that fashion of the most divine of all gifts. You are not intimating that your poem is too wicked to publish?"

"No!" He flung out his hands, striking the window. His eyes expanded and flashed. "I believe it to be the most beautiful poem ever conceived!" he cried. "I never before knew much about any of my poems until I had pen in hand, but although I could not recite a line of this I can see it all. I can feel it. I can hear it. It calls me in my dreams and whispers when I am closest to you. And you—you—are its inspiration. You have liberated all that was locked from my imagination before. I lived in an unreal world until I knew, lived with you. Knowing that so well, I believed that my deserted muse would either take herself off in disdain or be smothered dead. Art has always been jealous of mortal happiness. But the emotions I have experienced in the past six months—despair, hope, despair, hope, superlative happiness, mere content, the very madness of terror and its equally violent reaction, when I experienced the profoundest religious emotion—all this has enriched my nature, my mind, that abnormal patch in my brain that creates. Ever since I took pen in hand I have dreamed of a poetic meridian that I have never approached—until now!"

"What must it be!" cried Anne, quivering with excitement and delight. "You have done more than other men already."

"I have never written a great poetical drama. My faculty has been mainly narrative, lyric, epic, with dramatic action in short bursts only. The power to build a great, sustained and varied drama, the richness and ripeness of dramatic imagination, of character portrayal, representation as distinct from analysis, of vigorous scenes that sweep through the excited brain of the reader with the rush of the hurricane,

and owe nothing to metrical sweetness, to lyrical melody—that has never come before—and now—now—"

"You will write it! Do you—can you imagine that I am jealous—that I am not as ambitious for you as you could be for yourself?"

"I have never been ambitious before. I have never cared enough about the world. I wrote first because the songs sang off the point of my quill, and then to keep a roof over my head. I have never placed any inordinate value on my work after it was done, although the making of it gave me the keenest happiness, the polishing delighted all the artist in me. It is only now, now, for the first time, that I have been fancying myself going down to posterity in the company of the immortals. Oh, God, what irony! When it did not matter the inspiration lagged, and now it can do me no good!"

"But it shall! And as much for me as for your fame. Your work has been little less to me than yourself. I must have this!"

He turned to her for the first time and looked at her curiously. "Is it possible that you do not know the reason why I cannot write?" he asked. "We have avoided the subject, but I understood that you knew. Hunsdon told me—"

"Oh, yes! but that was when you were physically and morally a—" she stopped short, blushing painfully.

"A wreck," he supplemented grimly.

"Well! You had let yourself go. Now it is different. You are well. You are happy. Even your brain is stronger—your will, as a matter of course."

"I never wrote a line in my earliest youth without stimulant."

"But you might have done so. It is only a freak of imagination that prompts you to believe that you cannot write alone, that you must take alcohol into partnership, as it were. Even little people are ruled by imagination; how much more so a great faculty in which imagination must follow many morbid and eccentric tracks? And habit, no doubt, is the greatest of all forces, while

it is undisturbed. But that old habit of yours has been shattered these last months. You made no attempt to resist before. You could resist now. If I have been the inspiration of this poem, why cannot I take the place of brandy? It is no great compliment to me if I cannot. Try."

He put his hands on her shoulders and looked more the man than the poet for the moment. "Anne," he said solemnly. "Let well enough alone. I made up my mind to write no more the day you promised to marry me. I told you that the lover had buried the poet, and I believed it. But I find that the poet must come to life now and again—for a while at least. But although the process will be neither pleasant nor painless, I shall strangle him in time."

"Can you?"

"Yes—I think so."

"And be quite as happy as before?"

"Oh, I am not prophet enough for that. I can never be unhappy while I have you."

"And I could never be happy if I let you kill a gift that is as living a part of yourself as your sense of vision or touch. Do you suppose I ever deluded myself with the dream that you would settle down into the domestic routine of years—write political pamphlets for Hunsdon? I knew this would come and I never have had a misgiving. I know you can write without stimulant. Nothing can be more fanciful than that the highest of all mental gifts must have artificial aid. That may be the need of the little man driving a pen for his daily bread, of the small talent trying to create, but never for you!"

"There is some strange congenital want. I am certain of it. And if I gave way, Anne, I should be a madman for days, perhaps weeks—a beast—oh! you have not the faintest suspicion; and all I am living for in the wretched present is that you never may."

"I do not believe in permanent congenital weaknesses with a free, rich faculty like yours. I know how that fatal idea has wedged itself in your brain—but if you try—if you persist—

you will overcome it. Promise me that you will try."

"You are so strong," he said sadly. "You cannot conceive, with all your own imagination, the miserable weaknesses of the still half-developed human brain. The greatest scientific minds that have spent their lives in the study of the brain know next to nothing about it. How should you, dear child? I know the curse that is the other half of my gift to write, but of its cause, its meaning, I know nothing. You are strong by instinct, but you have not the least idea why or how you are strong. It is all a mysterious arrangement of particles."

"But that is no reason one should not strive to overcome weakness."

"Certainly not. But I have so much at stake that I think it wisest to kill the temptation outright, and not tempt providence by dallying with it. And this regarding the arbitrary exercise of the imagination: It is the small people of whom you spoke just now who are the slaves of what little imagination they have, who can make themselves ill or sometimes well under its influence. But when a man uses his imagination professionally as long as I have done it takes a place in his life apart. It has no influence whatever on his daily life, on his physical or even his mental being. He knows it too well. It would seem as if the imagination itself were cognizant of this fact and were too wise to court defeat."

"I can understand that, but I also know that genius is too abnormal to accept any such reasoning, no matter what the highly developed brain may be capable of. Unknown to yourself you have become the victim first of an idea, then of a habit. You will struggle and exhaust yourself and end by hating yourself and me. You have no doubt that this would be a greater work than your greatest?"

"Oh, no! No!"

"Then do me the justice to make one attempt at least to write it. Come to the library!"

His face had been turned from her

for some moments, but at the last words, so full of concrete suggestion, he moved irresistibly and she saw that his eyes were blazing with eagerness, with a desire she had never seen.

"Come," she said.

He stared at her, through her, miles beyond her, then turned mechanically toward his library. "Perhaps," he muttered. "Who knows? Why not?"

XII

WHEN Anne rose the next morning and tapped on Warner's door there was no answer. She entered softly, but found that his bed had not been occupied. For this she was not unprepared, and although she had no intention of galling her poet with the routine of daily life, still must he be fed, and she went at once to the library to invite him to breakfast. He was not there. She glanced hastily over the loose sheets of paper on his writing-table. There were a few scratches, unintelligible phrases, nothing more. In the gallery she met the major-domo, who informed her that the master had gone out in his boat about five o'clock. The day was clear and the waters calmer. There was no reason for either surprise or uneasiness, and Anne, who expected vagaries of every sort until the poem was finished, endeavored to while away the long day with a new novel sent her by Medora Ogilvy. But she had instinctively taken a chair by a window facing the sea, and as the day wore on and she saw no sign of boat of any sort, she finally renounced the attempt to keep her mind in tune with fiction. She snatched a brief luncheon and omitted siesta, returning to her seat by the window. The fate of Shelley haunted her in spite of her powerful will, and she sat rigid, her hands clasped about her knees, her face white. When Warner's boat shot suddenly round the corner of the island the relief was so great that without waiting to find a sunshade she ran out of the house and down to the sands, reaching his side before the boat was beached.

"You should not come out at this hour—and without a sunshade," he said, but keeping his face from her.

"If you could stand it for hours out on those hot waters it will not hurt me for a moment or two here. Have you had any luncheon?"

"I got a bite in Basseterre. Let us go in."

As he raised himself she saw that his face was haggard, his eyes faded. He looked as if he had not slept for weeks. When they reached the living-room he flung himself with a word of muttered apology on a sofa and slept until late. The dressing-bell roused him and he went to his room, reappearing at the dinner-table. There he talked of his morning excursion, declaring that it had done him good, as he had long felt in need of a change of exercise, and had missed the water.

It was not until they were in the living-room again that he said abruptly: "I can't do it. Let us not talk about it. The air is delightfully cool. Shall we order the carriage and call on the Ogilvys?"

The roads were deep in mud, but the moon was bright, the air fresh and stirred by the trade wind that always finds its way to Nevis even in summer during one hour of the twenty-four. Warner played billiards with Mr. Ogilvy and Anne listened to the hopes and fears of her hostess respecting Lord Hunsdon, while Felicia, the second daughter, poured out her envy of Medora's good fortune in enjoying a London season and its sequel of visits to country houses.

They returned late. Warner was almost gay and very much the lover. The next few days were magnificent and Anne saw for the first time a West Indian island in all its glory of young and infinite greens. Less like a jewel than in her golden prime, Nevis seemed to throb with awakening life like some great bird-of-paradise that had slept till spring. Warner and Anne remained out of doors in all but the hotter hours, and the poet was once more the normal young husband rich in the possession of a beautiful and sympathetic wife.

Anne was wise enough to make no allusion to the unborn poem. When curiosity piqued or impatience beset, she invoked the ugly shade of Lady Byron and resolved anew that, while alert to play her part in Warner's life, she would be guided wholly by events.

The rains began again, those terrible rains of a tropic summer, when the heavens are in flood and open their gates, beating palm tops to earth, tearing the long leaves of the banana tree to ribbons, turning the roads into roaring torrents, and day into night. Boats were used in the streets of Charlestown. The heat was stifling. The Caribbean Sea roared as if boiling tides were forcing their way from Mount Misery on St. Kitts to the crater of Nevis. Warner pretended to read during the day, but it was not long before Anne discovered that he stole from his room every night, and she knew his goal. He appeared at the nine o'clock breakfast, however, and neither made allusion to the vigils written in his face. At first it was merely haggard, but before long misery grew and deepened, misery and utter hopelessness; until Anne could not bear to look at him.

The storms continued. Ten days passed. Anne was not sure that he even slept in the daytime. He ceased to speak at all, although he managed to convey to Anne his gratitude that she was good enough to let him alone. Once she suggested a trip to England as soon as they could get a packet for Barbados, but he merely shook his head, and Anne knew that he would not stir from Nevis.

There came a night when Anne too gave up all attempt to sleep. Even after her illness she had found no difficulty in resuming the long, unbroken rest of youth, but youth had taken itself off in a fright.

On this night she wandered about and faced the truth. It was a night to make the least imaginative face an unhappy crisis. A small hurricane raged, seeming to burst in wild roars from Nevis itself. The streams on the mountain were cataracts. The sea threatened the island. At another time

Anne, like other West Indians, would have paid incessant visits to the barometer, but tonight she cared nothing for the threat of the elements. A storm raged within her, and she had a perfect comprehension of the madness and despair in the library.

She was out of her fool's paradise at last. She knew that he would never write his drama without the aid that marvelous but rotten spot in his brain demanded. And its delivery was in her hands. He was the soul of honor, unselfish, high-minded. He had taken the woman he loved better than himself into his life and he would keep the promise he had voluntarily made her unless she released him. He would conquer and kill the best part of him.

Anne had no apprehension of his physical death. No doubt his mere bodily well-being would go on increasing after the struggle was over; but what of his thwarted intellect, the mind-emptiness of a man who had known the greatest of mortal joys, mental creation? What of the haunting knowledge throughout a possibly long life, of having deliberately done a divine gift to death?

Anne felt like a murderer herself. She went suddenly out into the gallery, and stood for a moment with her arms rigidly upraised to the black, rolling sky. There was no response in the fury of the rain that drowned her face and compelled her to bend her head.

The great banana tree was whipping about like a live creature in agony. She could hardly keep her breath, and the salt spray flew over the roof and touched her lips. The elements roared and shrieked and whistled in a colossal orchestra, and above them she could hear that most uncanny of all sounds in a West Indian storm, the rattling of the hard seeds of the giant tree in their brittle pods.

But the noise inflamed rather than benumbed the tumult in her soul. Little as her husband suspected it, the gossip of Bath House and her own imagination had enabled her to realize the being he was and the life he led when trans-

formed by drink. She had long since put those images from her, but they peopled the gallery tonight. And they were hideous, loathsome. She felt old and dry and wrecked and polluted in the mere contemplation of them. Could even her love survive such an ordeal? or life? She had experienced mortal happiness to an extraordinary degree. Were she firm now, she might know it again—not to the same degree—doubtless not—but all that a mere mortal had any right to expect after that one foretaste of immortality. She had her rights. Her life could be made monstrous for a time; then she would go back and live on through countless years by the North Sea. For did Warner return to the habits of the years that had preceded their marriage his extinction would be a mere question of time. He might survive this work, and another; for he would never return to this battle between his love for her and for a love older still and far more deeply ingrained. A year or two and he would be under the island.

And in any case he must suffer. As far as he was concerned it was a question which was the less of the evils. If he returned from a long disgrace in Charlestown to face her again, not even the great work he had accomplished would make him hate himself the less, atone for the final ruin of his self-respect. If he conquered he would be a maimed and blighted being for the rest of his days.

And then the grinning images disappeared and she had another vision. She saw Warner ten years hence, a sleek and prosperous planter, taking an occasional recreation in the great capital with his handsome wife, and smirking at the reminders of its prostration before his glorious youth; congratulating himself and her at his escape; that his soul, not his body, was rotting under Nevis.

Anne turned her face to the wall and pressed her hands to her eyes. The noise of the storm she no longer heard, but the picture filled her with terror. What right had either he or she to consider so insignificant and transient a

thing as human happiness, the welfare of the body that began its decay with its birth? Genius of mental creation was the most mysterious, the most God-like of all gifts, as well as the rarest; the herd of small composers counted no more than the idle gossip that filled up awkward pauses. Great gifts were not without purpose bestowed; and as they should be exercised for the good of the inarticulate millions so should they be carefully tended until Time alone extinguished them. In Warner this great gift of poetic imagination combined with a lyric melody never excelled was to his nature what religion was to common mortals. It had kept the white flame of his inner life burning undimmed when men whose lives were creditable had long since forgotten that souls, except as mere religious furniture, were to be taken into account.

Warner had been singled out to enrich the world of letters. That was his mission on earth; all, no doubt, that he had been born for. Youthful training exercised hardly more influence upon the development of the race than literature. If it had no mission it would never have tracked through the infinite variety of interests in the mundane mind to become one of the earthly vice-roys of God. And the chosen were few. Nor had Warner, consciously or not, been indifferent to the sacredness of his wardship. Never for a moment had it felt the blight of his wild and often gross and sordid life. He had been passionate, but never sensual, romantic and primal, but never immoral. He had consoled thousands for the penance of living, and he had written much that would perish only with the English language. All this might be as nothing to what strove for delivery now. And this he was desperately engaged in stifling to death; and not the beauty of his mind alone, but of his nature, for beyond all doubt his gentleness and sweetness and refinement were as much a part of his genius as irritability and violence were fellows to the genius of other men.

Anne was tempted to wish that he had died before she met him, taken

body and unmaimed gifts out of life before she was burdened with their keep. But she was a strong woman and the wish passed. The wild ebullition of self had gone before. She did not recall her promises to Hunsdon, but she remembered her solemn acknowledgment of her responsibilities the night before her marriage and her silent vows at the altar.

Suddenly she became aware that she was soaked to the skin. She went hastily within and changed her clothes, wrung out her hair and twisted it up. Then she went to the library and opened the door softly. Warner

was sitting at the table with his face pressed to the wood, his arms flung outward among the scattered white blank sheets. Anne longed to go forward and take his head into the shelter of her deep maternal bosom. But it was not the time for sentiment, maternal or connubial. To reach his plane and solve his problem she must leave her sex behind her and treat him as a man and a comrade. She left the room, and returning a moment later placed the decanter of brandy and a tumbler on the table beside him. Then she left the room again.

THE END



HEARTH-SONG

By Louise Elizabeth Dutton

I'M gettin' very old now;
My daughter's hearth is wide;
They buried Michael yesterday,
That sat the other side.

It's "Children, hush your playin'
An' leave your granny be!"
But it's just your name I'm sayin',
For that sounds sweet to me.

The first time ever I saw you,
It was at Kilnet Fair;
The ribbon that I had was blue,
And blue is gay to wear.

An'—you've been dead this forty year
An' Michael but a day,
But it is not Michael's name I hear
When the children think I pray.

I'm gettin' very old now,
My daughter's hearth is wide;
They buried Michael yesterday
An' I'll lie by his side.

"UNSIGHT AND UNSEEN"

By Minnie Barbour Adams

I HAD noticed all the spring that my work was falling off, but it had never been borne in upon me that it was all off—which sounds like slang, but it ain't—till that particular Sunday in May.

I hadn't been to church for six weeks, for I was all stove up from falling into that plaguey barrel that I was standing on while trying to coax a nasty, wet strip of wallpaper to stick to the minister's ceiling. They were away at the time and we did it for a surprise; but, lawsy! some of us hard-working, perspiring females had a surprise of our own before we was through with it.

Sister Jenkins got hers when she stepped in a puddle of paste and sat down in it so hard that her three double chins like to telescoped the top of her head. Phoebe Harris got hers when she rushed to the pantry with her arms full of things she'd just washed up, but got the wrong door—they being side by side—and fell down cellar, bumping and screeching like mad at every step, and sounding like the tin-peddler's wagon did that time it ran away.

I was awfully scared, but I'd laughed if I'd a-died for it; and for a minute I thought I was going to, for my laughing joggled the board off of the barrel and it opened its black jaws and swallowed me up, a nail in its side scratching my leg scandalous as I went down.

So, that cool morning in May, it seemed pretty good to be back in church again; and when I recognized Brother Forbes's sermon as the one he had preached over at Kasson last summer while I was visiting Jennie Frizzelle,

I thought I had no call to try to follow it again, but would just look over the congregation and get some ideas. I got one, particular; but it was not the comforting kind that a body is supposed to get in the sanctuary. It was that most of my customers had their spring sewing done, at least a new dress apiece, without any assistance from me, and that, in the words of the old prophet, "my occupation was gone." Most of them had little dinky Eton jackets like those I'd seen in the style book, the only difference being that they were all alike, as though they'd been cut from the same pattern. They were mostly trimmed different, though, some having tucks, some stitched straps, while others were shirred and trimmed with braid; and I didn't have to look far for the source of all this grandeur, for Birdie Pettit, Mrs. Dibbell's niece, had them all on hers with the addition of some little crocheted mats about big enough for the ink bottle slapped on wherever there was room for one.

I remembered that Birdie had come over from Red Wing about Christmas for a visit, and Mrs. Dibbell had given a party for her, and the girls said she was dressed awfully stylish; and then, later, that she'd come back to do some sewing for them, which "them" I now saw meant the whole town.

Well, I didn't blame 'em a mite, though, of course, it hurt like the nation. I was likely getting rusty and behind the times through not being able to buy many fashion books or to go to the city to get the styles. There had never been much to do, the town being small and most everyone able to do all their sewing with the exception of a

dress now and then. But I suppose those Etons had been more than they dared to tackle, or more than they cared to trust me to. But what was I to do? The little money I'd saved since I'd got all of ma's doctor and medicine bills paid up, two years before, was about gone, and where any more was coming from I didn't know.

I was so worried and humiliated that I didn't hear any more of the services, and wouldn't if they'd a-been run by a Moody and Sankey. Wild thoughts and plans unbefitting the house of the Lord flitted through my mind. I'd mortgage the house, go to the city, look up the styles, and the most aggravated ones at that, get a whole raft of fashion literature, and then— Let's see. Oh, of course they'd put it in the paper that I'd gone, and what for; and when I came back I'd make myself the most stunning dress, with more tucks and straps and crocheted lamp mats than Birdie Anastasia Pettit had ever dreamed of, and then I'd come walking into church a little late— My land! I'd glanced at strange folks' clothes in church before now, feeling it to be my business as much as it was the preacher's to preach; but I'd never deliberately given myself up to such worldly thoughts. I'd stop and plan those aprons for the Ladies' Aid Society; but just then the congregation rose to sing the doxology and I had to give that up.

Lots of people came and shook hands and asked how I was, but they was sort of self-conscious and ill at ease; even the minister's wife seemed, for the first time since I knew her, to realize that she had on a new dress, and if I hadn't known her so well I should have thought she was set up over it. But, lawdy! didn't I know how she felt, standing before the woman that had made her clothes for five years and always thrown off a lot through respect for the cloth? And I was awful sorry for her.

I did all I could to make them think I hadn't noticed, and if I had that I didn't care; even going so far as to whisper to Ida Gove when we got out-

side, and loud enough for them all to hear, that I was afraid I'd just *have* to copy that pretty sleeve when I got able to make a new suit for myself.

They chirked up a lot after that and got quite easy, which same I cannot say of my conscience. I went around to the post-office with a bunch of them, and Lizzie asked me home to dinner with her; but I made some excuse, feeling that I'd have to get home and be alone where I could think.

I most wished I had, though, when I got my clothes changed and started in to rustle up something for dinner. I'd been getting along all right, not having had any appetite; but going to church had given me one that bread and tea would in no way satisfy. I went through the cupboard and pantry, but there wasn't so much as a bean or a grain of rice, or anything else, as I knew there wasn't all the time; and I set down in the doorway plumb discouraged.

The house had never seemed so little or so shabby and bare as it did that day. Everything was faded and old and, like me, about outgrown their usefulness. Still, I was only a couple of months past forty, though looking lots more from caring for ma so long, and working so hard. Well, things looked as though I might have a long rest, even my stomach, which they say is a sure cure for dyspepsia—which I didn't have, but it would likely act as a preventative.

The thought was so ridiculous that I giggled a little, but it ended in a sob; and, brushing the Woman's something that I'd got at the post-office after church off the chair, I laid my head on it and cried, and did it good and plenty while I was about it. I quit, however, as soon as I could conveniently, for it only made me hungrier; and while I was calming down I fell to looking at the paper on the floor to sort of help it along. There was a picture of a man on it—a gentle, kind-faced man with big, sad eyes—and I wondered if he'd had his feelings hurt, or if any Birdie Anastasia Pettit had come bothering around upsetting things for him. He didn't look a bit

strong. He wasn't the kind of a man a woman'd say to: "Here, Dave, just hist that Brussels carpet out of the sitting-room onto the line, and then put the cupboard in the hall and the cook-stove on the back porch and paint the kitchen floor." Instead, she'd be apt to say: "Never mind them swill-pails, Davie; I'm going down that way myself pretty soon. Do you take Mrs. Hemans' poems or that book of Talmage's sermons and go out and set on the porch till dinner is ready."

But all that nonsense didn't appease my hunger any, so I sat "David" primly up in the chair and fell to studying the dinner problem again. As I pondered, my eyes wandered disconsolately out across the yard, and suddenly stopped on a great bunch of horseradish growing in a sheltered corner. Greens!

Talk about the bread and meat that the ravens fed Elijah, which I always felt that I'd a-spleened against, or the manna that the Israelites lived on! I'd never tasted either, but I felt sure they could not compare with greens for either taste or filling qualities.

I had a bit of ham-bone with quite a few scraps of meat on it; not enough to cook by itself, but mighty good for seasoning. I kindled a fire and got it on to boil in about three minutes, and then I snatched my sunbonnet and dish-pan and came near slapping the latter on my head, I was so excited; and the way I picked horseradish was a caution, looking over every leaf as I went along. I added a handful of dandelion and mustard leaves for the flavor, and soon they was boiling away and filling the house with an odor that was far sweeter—for the time being, at least—than attar of roses.

If I only had a potato or two. But mine had long been gone, and I didn't want to borrow from the neighbors, not knowing if I could ever pay 'em back. Could it be possible that I'd overlooked one? I took some matches and, going down cellar, balanced myself over the edge of the bin like a teeter-board, just about sawing myself in two and burning three matches and a finger; but I

found a couple—one big one about as withered and wrinkly as old Mother Morrel, and a mite of a one, real crisp; both with long, pale sprouts creeping through the cracks toward the light; but they were potatoes, just the same.

I felt real grateful when, at last, I sat down to dinner, and a little like Nebuchadnezzar, though I don't suppose he cooked his, poor man.

I'd laid the paper on the table when I'd set down in the chair, and now I wondered, as I looked at the picture of the man again, if he had ever been reduced to greens for Sunday dinner. I leaned forward to see what was written above his head, and maybe I wasn't surprised when I read:

A poor, lone man wants to correspond with a nice woman. No object but pleasure and entertainment for long evenings.—DAVID KENDALL.

"Well, David," I laughed, "you look mighty forlorn, but I don't intend cheering up any of your long evenings, now or in the future, for that's about what the advertisement amounts to." Then I forgot all about it and calmly ate my way right through the little pile of greens and potatoes and out on the bare platter beyond, and I didn't think of it again till I sat in the doorway that evening listening to the frogs croaking down in the pond, and "Come, ye disconsolate" faintly from the church up on the hill.

I'd wanted to go that night; there was nothing in the house to read but the Bible and a few religious books of ma's, and, somehow, my spirit rebelled against them. It was downright wicked, and I'd a-been awfully ashamed to have anyone know it, but I wanted a good story-book that night worst of anything I knew of.

I might as well get used to it though, for I was likely to have a good many just such evenings, now that I didn't have any sewing to do. I wondered why David Kendall was so lonesome; if he was alone in the world as I was. No wonder the poor fellow wanted someone to write to, though I didn't exactly like the means he'd taken to get 'em; still—oh, I might as well tell

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it first as last. I sat there and thought for an hour, then went in the house, lit the lamp and pulled down the shades as close as though I was going to fit a dress on Sarah Truax, got the pen and ink out of the pantry, and chewed the end of it for another hour before I could think of a word to write. And when I did it wasn't much; only that I knew I didn't come up to the requirements of a correspondent, for I wasn't nice at all—no really nice woman would have answered that advertisement, and, come to think about it, no really nice man would have written it; that there was another similarity between us besides not being nice. I was a poor, lone woman, too, and I was likely to need entertainment for more than one long evening, and this letter-writing had furnished amusement for one as I hoped it would for him. Then I sealed it up and hid it under the dictionary—I started to slip it under the "Lives of the Saints," but it seemed sort of sacrilegious—and went to bed, feeling like a silly sixteen-year-old fool instead of a forty-one.

The coming Tuesday made me think of the kind of bacon I most admire. I'd had my lean streak and now I suddenly ran into the fat, for Jim Sawyer's folks come in from the country and just begged me to go home with 'em and sew 'em up. I told 'em I wasn't well enough to do much on account of that plaguey barrel, but Jim said I could work when I felt like it and sleep and eat the rest; and as my appetite was increasing far faster than my means to feed it, I went.

I had plenty of time to think over the foolish thing I'd done as I sat all day in Kate Sawyer's spare bedroom—that is, when I wasn't eating and sleeping—sewing on pretty gingham and lawns, and I blushed more burning, sizzling blushes that made my eyes water than I had for twenty years. Why, one day Kate happened to mention that she was going to answer an advertisement saying someone wanted to trade seashells for peacock feathers, and my fool color never got beyond the first few words, but flamed up in my neck and

face, fairly scorching my hair; and Kate, thinking I was going to have an epileptic fit, threw cold tea all over me and that night made me drink a pint bowlful of boneset. But that was nothing to the way I felt Saturday evening when I saw Jim coming home from town. If I'd a-run off with the Aid Society's money or the preacher, and he'd a-been the sheriff, I couldn't have been more worked up, and when he waved a letter at me as I stood on the front stoop I like to fainted.

"I tell you, Martha, I don't like them feverish spells of yours," Kate said, looking anxiously at me. "Do you have any pains under your shoulder-blades?"

"No; but I'm sick at my stomach!" I snapped, so mad at myself that I could have bitten a tenpenny nail in two: It was a real nice letter, though, telling how mine had cheered him one lonely, stormy evening when the only sound to be heard was the rain dripping from the eaves and a hoot-owl from the cupola. He was a farmer on a place back from the road a piece, and right in the edge of the woods; and while it was all very beautiful daytimes, with the bright spring sunshine and the birds nearly splitting their little throats and all the young, growing things whispering to each other (my land! I realized that Mrs. Hemans wouldn't be satisfying; he ought to have some of Mr. Burroughs's books), the evenings were so lonesome and endless that he actually dreaded them. He had lots of books and magazines, but, land of love! a body can't read all the time. David only insinuated that last, but as it's my experience, too, I unconsciously put it in my own words. He didn't agree with me in what I said about no nice person answering an advertisement such as his. It had been an appeal for help just as urgent and real as though he'd been a drouth or grasshopper sufferer asking for clothes or seed-corn; and a man's letters would have been just as acceptable, only he was so tarnation tired of men, for they were about all he ever saw. And would I write soon, real soon, and tell him something about

myself?—and he'd await a letter with much interest.

"Pretty flowery, David," I laughed as I finished, and then added more soberly: "But real straightforward and manly."

I wondered a lot why a man so delicate and sickly should have chosen farming as a vocation. His picture looked more like a clerk or school-teacher—the kind that's always asked to write up the Sunday School picnic and ice cream sociable for the country paper, and that sometimes turns out a beautiful obituary with maybe a bit of original poetry tacked on the end, where woes and joys are supposed to rhyme; and it seemed a shame for him to bury himself on that lonely farm, a rented one, I took it.

Well, I answered it the day Jim went to town and Kate went along for more gingham. I got the children interested in mud pies—something they've missed so far, their ma having no appetite for them; but I felt sure they needed them that day more than they did the sulphur and molasses that they were everlastingly gagging over—and so did I.

I told him all about teaching school so many years, only going into dress-making when I realized that I couldn't in reason expect to have ma with me very long, and that I'd better enjoy her while I could. She was such a jolly, chirrupy little body, always making light of her infirmities and suffering, and saying that if she wasn't so contentedly lazy she could just work rings around me, for all I was so nifty. Then when—well, after it was all over and the house was so still that the chirping of a cricket under the bricks of the hearth sounded most as loud as the buzz-saws down at the mill, I found myself confronting a debt that seemed to me as big and as unsurmountable—or get-around-able—as the Chinese wall, and I felt just about as squashed and hopeless as I would if some Chinnee had dropped it on me; but in time I remembered the quotation about the constant dropping wearing away the stone, and I turned a stream of dimes and nickels onto it that eventually did

the business. But it was lonesome, terribly lonesome, which, I began to agree with him, was just as serious as drouth and grasshoppers.

I asked him how he was feeling and added a recipe for a herb- tonic that he could gather in his own woods and that beat all for bracing a body up.

I went home the next Saturday, leaving Kate's clothes-presses so bulging full of ruffled gingham and things that the doors would hardly shut; and I went straight to the post-office, too, as soon as I'd carried all the nice things they'd given me into the pantry and they'd got out of sight.

"This makes two you've got from the same place in a week, Marthy," Sarah Truax cackled as she twisted one glass of her specs around to get a focus with her good eye, and held David's letter to the light.

"You'd better begin tallying on the door, Sairy," I said, as sweet as could be, "for I'm going to get a whole lot more."

"They're in a man's handwrite, Marthy," she returned accusingly.

"And those I send back are in a woman's handwrite, Sairy," I said in the same tone; and as I walked away, laughing, I heard her slamming mail into the boxes so hard it was a wonder she didn't punch the glass out.

I think I showed a whole lot of self-denial in what I did with that letter. I knew from experience what Sunday would be like. I didn't believe in visiting very much, and, anyway, it seemed to me a day when families should be alone together, and I knew if I had one I shouldn't want an old maid nosing around unless it was an act of charity, and that I couldn't tolerate, which seems a little mixed, but that's the way I feel. So I deliberately opened the Bible at the seventh chapter of the Acts and put the letter there; and Sunday afternoon when church and dinner was over I began at the third chapter, which was where I was at, and I read up to it and then felt that my conscience was easy. But, dear me! it isn't clear in my mind to this day just where Peter and John went or exactly what they

went for; and if the story of Ananias and Sapphira hadn't a-been dinged into my ears since babyhood, I'm afraid that would have been just as hazy.

Then I read the letter. He said he was quite well, thank you, which I took to be like one of ma's prevarications, and if he should be ailing at any time he'd take the tonic, for the woods was full of them. That he wished he had known me when I was struggling along alone with sickness and death, that he might have been some help and comfort to me. But what had I been doing since? My story had stopped right there. Was I still dressmaking? Was it profitable, and what was my home like? Did I have any animals to love and care for? He had lots of them; the birds and squirrels were quite tame, and he'd always taught his cats not to touch them. Then he had a great big dog and a little mite of a one, and the little one was boss. And he had a pet pig that followed him to town one day, just like Mary's little lamb, and mortified him awfully; but he didn't give it a chance to linger near, but tied its legs together and put it in the bottom of the buggy, where it squealed all the way home.

His letter was very interesting, but it was pitiful, for where other folks would have mentioned friends and relatives, he spoke only of the horses and cows, even some of the chickens by name, showing what a lonely man he was.

I wondered how he managed to do his cooking and housework and everything else besides. Likely he didn't try to get much to eat and that was why he looked so big-eyed and peaked, and I decided that what he needed most was a good, capable woman to take care of him; someone that would be a companion, too, and would enjoy his books and magazines and love his pets; and I spent a good hour that night when I ought to have been in bed, seeing I was going to make a wamus for Daddy Rice in the morning, going over in my mind every female in Byron between the ages of twenty-five and forty. I wouldn't consider one a day younger

than that for fear of her being silly and trifling; or one over, for she'd likely be too set in her ways; but I couldn't hit on one that seemed to fit the bill in all things. If she was a good cook and housekeeper, like as not Shakespeare and Mr. Dooley was all one to her and David would be as bad off evenings as before; and if she was up in literature, then she wouldn't know the first blamed thing about cooking, and when he set for another picture, he'd label it "After Taking," and the one I'd seen in the paper "Before."

By the way, where was that paper? I thought I'd like to see him again, now that I knew him better; but, hunt as I would, I couldn't find it.

When I wrote I told him about my dressmaking up to the début of Birdie Anastasia Pettit, and about my home, which was real pretty, barring the house, which was like the doll-house Cousin Bert made and tossed out of the hay-mow window into the weeds when I called him a sissy for pounding my finger instead of the nail I was holding for him; and I didn't find it till the next summer. It was so lopsided and weather-beaten that the doll-house cat would not have had to wait for the opening of a door to get out, and my house was much the same; the rain and snow taking the same means of getting in.

Being forty, I had a cat, of course, a very beautiful cat by the name of Thomas Jefferson. Some robins had nested in the apple tree by the bedroom window for three years and now looked to me for a good share of their support; and a big, fat, blinky toad kept shop under the kitchen steps, coming out now and then for a little petting and bread crumbs. That was all I had, and I found it rather lonesome living at times.

Did he have anything dainty and appetizing for breakfast? Sometimes a little currant jelly would tempt me when nothing else would, and I was sending him a pint jar of it and a loaf of graham bread and a sponge cake wrapped in oiled paper, which would surely keep them from drying out going

that short distance, and couldn't hurt him a mite.

As the days grew longer and more settled, outgrowing their tearful, childish ways, I became so accustomed to getting David's letters that I never even turned color if half the town was in the post-office craning their necks to see when I got 'em. When I was little I used to shake and shiver when I read of those poor fanatics walking over hot plowshares, and wearing hair shirts and things, but now I knew it was all in getting used to it. That was the reason I didn't blush and sizzle any more as I had at first, but went on my way calm and serene, doing every scrap of work I could get to do, comforted and upheld by those sympathetic letters.

Someway, I was too proud to let people know the straits I was in, but David coaxed it out of me and after that it was a real comfort to tell him all about it. I suppose him being real poor, and sickly into the bargain, made him understand so well. He'd got so he'd say without my asking that he was some better, or that he was off his feed and other like remarks; and he told me once that he'd sold a calf, and often how much he'd got for eggs, so I knew he wasn't starving whatever else ailed him. Poor fellow. I wished he could have some of the health and strength that was coming my way and for which I had no immediate need, having so little to do; and it was getting mighty embarrassing at times.

I was awfully glad and thankful to be strong enough to chop that old, dead apple tree by the pump into firewood and to spade up and plant the scrap of garden; but I did object when I went into the Aid Society or Thimble Bee, to have every female hand go up and everyone cackling and chirping over the way I looked.

"Ten years younger! Fifteen years younger; taking on flesh, and such a color; and Lord-a-massy! look at her eyes sparkle! Martha Page, what have you been doing to yourself?"

And then Sarah Truax, that had got the Simington boy to tend post-office that afternoon and smoke cigarettes

enough to gag a body while he was doing it, would pipe up and say that I got a letter from a man at Fairfield every enduring week, and that was enough to chirk anyone up.

"Of course you speak from experience, Sarah," I said once, when hard pressed, and she shut up.

About the fourth letter I'd written David, I told him I thought he ought to get married; that a man as frail as he ought to have someone to take care of him, and, too, being happy and content would be beneficial to his health. Wasn't there some nice woman in his town that he liked? Anyway, he'd better go to picnics and sociables, and likely he'd meet someone.

Well, along in September I got a letter from him saying that at last he was prepared to follow my advice; that about next week he was going to ask one of the nicest women in the country to be his wife and he hoped she'd have pity on him and say "Yes."

Maybe I wasn't upset! I'd sort of got into the way of thinking that I'd go right on getting those letters the rest of my natural life, and, someway, I couldn't picture any future without 'em. I felt awful forlorn and hopeless all that week. One thing, I was about sick, having been out and stayed over Sunday with Susie Tucker, that everybody knows is the poorest cook in Olmstead County. I didn't have any appetite and didn't sleep nights, and that gave me lots of time to wonder and worry over the kind of woman David was getting, and I always wound up by thinking that, whatever kind she was, his getting her ended his writing to me; and at that stage I'd always have a good cry in anticipation.

I wrote and gave him some good advice, part Biblical and the rest gathered from sewing about in so many homes, and wished him every joy; and then settled down to wait for his next letter, that I felt sure would be the last.

I was so absent-minded that I botched up what little work I had to do, getting Minnie Tinker's sleeves in hind side before, and making Arby's pants wrong side up, which last isn't so very strange

considering I'd never made any before and the pattern being very misleading, as any mother will tell you; and as I set and snipped stitches I thought of what ma used to say to tease me when I first began to sew: "Ripping and sewing keeps Martha a-going."

I was so weak by Saturday, not having cooked much and worrying a lot, that I could hardly get down to the post-office.

"I'm to the bottom of the first panel, Marthy," Sarah said, with that silly little giggle of hers, and showed me a row of chalk marks, each one meaning a lot to me.

"Well, I don't know whether you'll need to use the other one or not, Sairy," I said, thoughtful like. "But say!" I cried suddenly, as though just seeing a way out of it, "couldn't you use the other one as a sort of bulletin-board for the news you get off of the postals?"

A shout of laughter went up, for there was always a lot of people about the post-office and they all knew that Sarah got all of her scoops, as they say in newspapers, from postals. Why, one day she says to me as she handed out a postal from Jennie saying she was sending me a new gingham dress for my birthday, "You'll give me a piece for my charm-quilt, won't you, Martha?"

Before the laugh had died away that day I was on my road home, not feeling very hilarious myself, for I hadn't got my letter from David—the first time he'd missed writing in nearly four months. Of course I understood why, but I crept back home and onto the lounge, feeling mighty forlorn, just the same, and plumb beat out.

I hugged Thomas Jefferson and sniveled for an hour, and then, feeling some better, fell to planning what I'd give him for a wedding present; and decided on the rising-sun quilt that I'd finished the summer before and nobody but the minister and his wife had ever slept under.

The next morning I dragged myself out to church, thinking I might get some comfort from the sermon; but it only made me feel worse, it being all

about our not placing any dependence in things earthly, for we'd get left every time if we did, and that there was only one true source of comfort—all of which I knew, so I fell to thinking of David and praying under my breath that he'd get the right sort, one that would see that he wore flannel over that narrow, hollow chest of his, and that he had good, nourishing food instead of salad and cake.

Then I added a little petition for myself as I thought of the long, cold winter ahead of me, with little or no work of any kind to do, and the old house about falling around my ears. I asked Him to temper the wind to the shorn—ah—sheep that wouldn't even have the comfort and sympathy of a letter a week to cheer her.

A big tear falling on my gray glove sort of brought me to myself, and in cautiously rubbing the place with my handkerchief so it wouldn't leave a spot I got sobered up and fit to meet the folks after church.

Alice Stevens asked me to go around to the post-office with her and I went, thinking that the afternoon would be long enough in all conscience anyway. She got a card from Si's folks saying they was better, and we had turned to go when Sarah Truax—blessings on her Sunday-frizzed head!—said, in her pert, sassy way:

"I've had to begin on that other panel, you mean old thing." And threw an awful big, fat letter, with two stamps on it, onto the little shelf outside the window.

Oh, my—maybe I wasn't surprised and pleased! For some reason I hadn't looked for it till the next Saturday; and I said good-bye to Alice in a hurry, telling her I felt sort of qualmish, which was the truth, and hurried home, made myself change my dress and get dinner, most of which Thomas Jefferson ate, as I couldn't; and then I set down to my big letter.

He began by saying that he was as well as could be expected, considering the anxious frame of mind he was in. (Landy! She hadn't said yes after all. Maybe, though, she didn't think it maid-

enly to say it right off and was taking time to think it over, as I believe they often do.)

Everything was going on as usual at the farm; the woods were at their best, and he often took long, solitary walks through them, though he hoped to have company on them before long. His flowers were very beautiful and he wished—

"Martha Page, will you be my wife?" I read next, my eyes nearly popping out of my head and my jaw sagging, I was so surprised.

Me! David Kendall was asking me to marry him! I just couldn't sense it, somehow. Of course it was all nonsense, for I didn't—

I stopped suddenly, wide-eyed and gasping, while a great wave of—the Lord knows what—swept over me, making the bare old room seem like heaven and me an angel.

"But I do!" I cried right out loud. "I've loved him like the nation all the time. But I've been such a silly old ninny that I didn't know what was ailing me." Land of love! but I was surprised, and so happy that I laughed and sniveled till I had scared Thomas Jefferson most out of his wits, and he vowed to get out.

When I got a little sense I read the rest. He asked me to answer real soon and put him out of his misery; and if I could see my way to saying yes, couldn't he come for me right away? Winter wasn't far off; he coughed pretty bad yesterday; and, too, he was afraid that the wind might blow the doll-house down some stormy night and smash me and Thomas Jefferson. He'd loved me from the first and, the Lord willing, he'd be a good husband to me, even though a very frail, puny one.

From thinking of that other woman I'd got some fool notion in my head of not saying "Yes, and thank you, sir," right off; but that about the cough and being frail and puny decided me.

"It's a little like the 'unsight and unseen' way us girls used to trade buttons for our charm strings," I told him; "but you can't be any homelier than I,

so I ain't afraid. And you needn't come after me, David; we might need that money lots worse for something else, you not being strong and winter coming on. Anyway, I ain't no spring chicken that's afraid to come alone; and if you'll meet me with the lumber-wagon for the trunks and furniture, and the preacher, that's all you'll need to see to."

They were happy, exciting days that followed, and the letters flew back and forth so fast that Sarah Truax got all mixed up on her tallying.

I sold the place to old Daddy Bunker for two hundred dollars, and in the days that elapsed till I saw it safely stowed away in David's pocket I realized something of the responsibility a Vanderbilt or an Astor must feel. I sold most of the furniture, too, he writing that he had enough to wiggle along with till he sold the two hogs, when we might buy a piece or two; but I kept out the big rocker, being afraid he might not have one to set in when he was tired, and the foot-rest that Uncle Jim give us, and us never having any use for, and the soapstone, thinking it would be nice to put to his feet when he was sick; and I'd saved the two little jars of strawberry-jam that Kate Sawyer had given me, though sorely tempted to use them at times, and by pretty close saving—and squeezing—I'd made a few glasses of jelly from my currants and gooseberries; and these I took along, thinking they might tempt his appetite when nothing else would.

While I was doing all this selling and packing, my needle was flying like the air-drill I was working once, for I had taken a little of the money and bought me a trousseau.

My land! Little did I think that I'd ever have occasion to use that word in the possessive case; but when I got my pretty things all done and laid out on the bed, I realized that no other word would have been adequate.

I wore my nice gray suit and hat, which was to be both wedding and traveling—and in my case the traveling came first—to church the last Sunday,

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which I knew was what the preacher had once spoken of in his sermon as "reprehensible vanity"; but I did want them to remember me as looking nice, and I had the comfortable feeling that, though lots older than Birdie Anastasia Pettit, and plainer, too, I was just as stylish looking for once.

Almost the whole town went to the depot with me, the biggest half to say good-bye and see me off, the rest to look on just as they do at funerals. Lots of them brought me little gifts, seven fetching me lunches which, seeing I was only going to be on the train three hours, I decided to take along to David, for I'd be so busy straightening up that I might not get much cooking done for a few days; and a lot brought flowers, and some magazines with which I was to pass the time; and Sarah Truax brought me a sack of taffy she'd made for me, and which I was to share with HIM if there was any left.

It took a whole seat to hold them, and I never looked at or into or tasted one of them the whole enduring way; I was too busy thinking.

I was mighty glad I was real strong and well, for I realized there was lots of hard work ahead of me; making a living and laying by anything on a rented farm was a hard proposition at best, but with David so frail it might be more than a proposition.

I was pretty nervous and upset by the time the train stopped at Fairfield, and when I got off and looked up and down the platform, and David wasn't in sight anywhere, I felt almost ready to cry. Then a great, big, homely man came hurrying up to me and asked in a kind of excited way, "Are you Martha Page?" and when I nodded he grabbed my hand and shook it hard. I understood. David was sick and had sent him, and I was awfully disappointed.

"How is he?" I asked, looking anxiously round for the wagon and thinking of my trunk.

"Who?" he cried, the corners of his big mouth beginning to crinkle.

"Wh—why, David," I stammered, beginning to feel scared.

He led me a few steps to where a nice buggy was standing and, one by one, took flowers and lunches, even the sack of taffy I had tucked under one arm, and, without a word, laid them on the seat. Then he took my cold, trembling hands into his big, warm ones and looked down at me, his pleasant brown eyes awfully gentle and tender.

"Oh, is he dead?" I gasped, for he had a regular "break-it-gently" air.

"Why, Martha, I am David Kendall," he said, his voice shaking a little. "Are you disappointed?"

I think that I stared at him for a whole minute. He David? This great big, strong fellow, with health written in capital letters all over him, the man I'd brought ma's blanket and the soapstone for? He looked as though he'd never had a sick day in his life, and his clothes and horse and buggy didn't look as though he was having much of a tussle with poverty.

"Are you disappointed, Martha?" he asked, an anxious look taking the place of the crinkle about his lips.

Was I? I gave him another long look, seeing things in his strong, homely face that were lacking in the picture.

"No," I said, with a little laugh that had an hysterical giggle to it. "No, I ain't disappointed; but I thought I was getting a pretty little glass button for my charm-string, and now I find it's the biggest and—"

"Homeliest?" he put in. He was about right, but I wouldn't say so.

"—strongest I ever saw," I finished. He looked relieved.

"You jolly little gray dove," he said, holding my hands close and looking down at me in a way that told me he was not disappointed either.

"Get in!" he cried suddenly, dropping my hands as though some thought had struck him.

He picked me up and set me over among the flowers and sandwiches just as though I'd been a three-year-old, and then he walked over to where a man was setting in a spring-wagon, chewing tobacco and watching us. I saw David give him the trunk-check and then point to Thomas Jefferson, yowl-

ing in Lizzie's old bird-cage, and my valise, reticule and parasol, which the brakeman had brought out, the conductor carrying the magazines and flowers that I couldn't carry. The man nodded and jumped down, and David came back to me.

"I'd planned to go right to the parsonage," he said, stepping in beside me; "but suppose we drive around a bit first. Are you sure you want me, Martha? You looked mighty upset when you first saw me."

"Well, who wouldn't?" I cried. "You don't look a mite like your picture, David."

"My picture?" he said, looking puzzled.

"Yes, the one in the paper right under your advertisement."

"But, Martha, I didn't send any picture," he protested, then burst into a great laugh. "Oh, I remember now! There was the picture of a poor fellow, and it said underneath that he'd had liver trouble for nine long years, and had been cured by Doctor Somebody's pills!"

"But your cough, David? You know you said—"

"I got choked on a fish-bone," he said, laughing again. "You seemed possessed with the idea that I was ailing and I was bound to humor you."

Well, I certainly was some flustered and turned around, and I tried to get that picture right out of my mind and remember only the nice, cheerful letters; and after he'd talked over things a little more, he stopped in front of a house by the church, which I supposed was the parsonage.

"Poor little woman," he said as he picked me up bodily and stood me on the porch. "I'm afraid she's got awfully cheated in this unsight and unseen business."

"Oh, I don't know," I said loftily. "The poor liver sufferer was better looking, but he'd a-taken a whole lot of molly-coddling."

He laughed out at that, but sobered down right away when we went into the house; and as I stood at his side before the preacher I thought it would

seem nice to be taken care of for once in my life instead of going right on doing for someone else as I always had.

Goodness me! When we went out to the buggy again I could hardly believe that I was Mrs. David Kendall, and that my lonesome, solitary days were over.

"There's the woods!" he cried suddenly, after we'd driven along a country road for a spell, pointing with the whip toward a long belt of timber already showing patches of red and yellow from an early frost. "And the house is in that little grove," he went on, driving up to a big white gate that led to a lane bordered with hickory and walnut trees.

"David!" I cried, catching his arm, for the horse was most to the gate now, and it shut. I thought he was so taken up with what he was saying that he hadn't noticed it; but just then it began to swing open, and when we got through I looked back and it was most shut again.

Well, that was only the beginning of surprises. We came to a little opening in the trees and I saw a whole village of red barns and sheds, with a windmill standing up tall and straight in the middle of them.

A big dog and a little one raced to meet us, and when the big one got too far ahead the little one cried and yelped till the big one ran back and started even again; and then a fat pig jumped up out of the weeds and trotted along beside us, squealing and "woof, woofing" till I nearly died laughing.

Everywhere I looked were great fields and pastures, and when David helped me out on the horse-block I just stood and stared; for instead of the little unpainted house I'd always pictured, there was a big white one with green blinds and a great wide porch covered with vines. And there was a woman sitting on the side one, trying to make friends with Thomas Jefferson, who was still in the cage, but purring sociably between laps of milk.

The man I'd seen at the depot came around the corner of the house.

"The Petersons, that run the farm

and the house—and me, too, sometimes," said David, laughing as they came shyly forward. "Hans and Annie, this is my wife," he added, something like pride in his voice, though I must have been mistaken.

We three shook hands; and then Annie, holding onto the sides of her white apron with each hand, stepped aside.

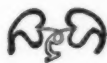
"Vill you valk mit the house, yas?" she said, smiling; and Hans nodded a number of times.

I started to go in the side door, with David after me; but, just as I got to the threshold, he suddenly caught my arm.

"No, Annie," he said decidedly; "my wife is going to enter her new home through the front door."

We left them, still smiling, though looking a little puzzled, and walked along the porch, around the hammock, past the chairs and table, to a front door the like of which I never saw, unless it was Judge Foster's.

He went in first, and then turned and held out his arms. I hung back a little, feeling just a mite scared. I wasn't used to being met at front doors in any such way; but one look into his kind, good face, though it was as homely as a mud fence, made me forget all about feeling foolish. I took a step forward. All the long years of privation and toil, of loneliness and care, rolled off my shoulders like water off of a duck's back; and I was at home.



ON THE STAIRS

By Edward Everett Nelson

HE said "Good-night," and he held her hand
In a hesitating way,
And he hoped that her eyes would understand
What his lips refused to say.

He held her hand and he murmured low:
"I'm sorry to go like this.
It seems so frigidly cold, you know,
This Mister of ours, and Miss."

"I thought—perhaps—" and he paused to note,
If she seemed inclined to frown;
But the light in her eyes his heartstrings smote,
As she blushing looked down.

She said no word, but she picked a speck
Of dust from his coat-lapel,
Such a small, such a wee little tiny fleck,
'Twas a wonder she saw so well.

And it brought her face so very near,
In that dim, uncertain light,
That the thought, unspoken, was made quite clear,
And I know 'twas a sweet "good-night."

A GIRL'S LETTERS TO HER GRANDCHILD

By Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland and Katharine Kingsley Crosby

FIRST LETTER

CHACQUOTTE, June 3.

MY DEAR LITTLE GRANDCHILD:
The curé says it is not well, but most unmaidenly and unbecoming, to think of one's own children-to-be, when one is only one-and-twenty; but I am sure he would not say the like of one's grandchildren-to-be, or mind my thinking of you and writing to you; for you are so very far off, and I so want to talk to somebody about things, having no confidante—no, no one to whom I can say the least word that has not to do with the far, far outside of things—with the draining of lands, or the rearing of cows and geese, or the making of flowers—oh, very unreal flowers!—on a tapestry frame, with a needle that goes in and out. One thinks of many other things than these, little granddaughter, when one is one-and-twenty; and it is good sometimes to speak the thoughts to a safe confidante—and who, *je t'en prie*, could be a safer confidante than one's own granddaughter . . . especially since it is so very unlikely she will ever be born? Yet if you should never live, why, you would have helped all the same; and wherever you are, that is a thing to be grateful for: *n'est-ce pas?*

Permit me, then, *ma p'tite-fille*, to introduce your *gran'-maman*. Well, me, I am one-and-twenty years old, and I live at the Château of Chacquotte and care for my father's daughter, who is the Lady of Chacquotte and care for my father's Félice, whom I ought to adore, because she is my sister and my châtelaine. It

is one of the things I can say to a confidante—that I am not quite always able to adore Félice, my sister and my châtelaine, as the curé says I should do. Sometimes I almost think I can adore her—but that is when I have not seen her for several hours.

She is my sister, this beautiful Félice, because the Seigneur de Chacquotte who was her father, was also mine. In our Brittany there still prevails the *droit de seigneur*—and the man to whom they married my little, sweet mother, he was very old and miserly and rich as a peasant may be rich; and he had the heart of a peasant and not of a man; and, as the Seigneur claimed his right, he gave a royal bride-gift. My *pauvre petite mère!*—she gave her life for my life—I think she gave it very willingly. Life is not good when one is married to a clod—and has a memory. She sent a word to the Seigneur de Chacquotte, when her pain came upon her and she knew she would not see its end. And the Seigneur de Chacquotte commanded that I be brought to the château and well reared and tended.

And so it was with me until I had five years—and then the Seigneur brought home to the château, from Paris, a great lady, as his wife—Angèle de Sevreumont, she was called—and of a great race, such as must be the mothers of the Seigneurs de Chacquotte. Of a great race—and it is a strange thing that one can come of a great race and yet have flickering eyes! Eyes where a little wanton, shining flame is always flickering—and always kindling, in the eyes of the men that meet it, an

answering flame that burns down and down, until it chars the soul. And yet a great race! I wonder at this thing, often and often, when I watch that little flickering flame in the eyes of Félice, her daughter.

It was in the year that we were all ruled by the wife of Monseigneur—the great lady with the flickering eyes—that Monseigneur my father first amused himself with what he called my education—and I was not six years old! He taught me to swim, and to handle a boat, and to ride—of all these things I had made good beginning before ever Félice, my sister, came to be my châtelaine—ay, and more—before I had had six years I had held a rapier in my hand and had crossed it with the rapier of Monseigneur my father—and the doing of his rapier was known wherever there was talk of swords in our France. “I must teach what I know while I remember to teach,” said Monseigneur my father; “I must teach until my son comes to be taught. And grant when he comes he have thy wrist, small Jeanne, and thy good courage—since he cannot have thine eyes!” They have told me that my eyes are my mother’s. . . .

But when his wife came to her hour, it was not of a son, but of a girl-child, as it had been with her who was my mother. And even as with my mother, so with his wife—her life paid for her child’s life. But I do not think it was with her as with my mother, that she was glad to pay—no, her life had been gay always—and never more gay than when the eyes of the great lords who sat at her husband’s table answered the flicker in her eyes. But, ill or well content, she went—and Félice—her daughter, stood châtelaine in her place.

She lay in her cradle—that little Félice—one green spring twilight when Monseigneur my father brought me to the side of her cradle. “It is well that you are so strong and like a boy, Jeanne,” he said when he had looked at me, “for you will have to care for Félice always, and keep her from harm. I would you were a boy, since men children there will be none for me; but

we must make the most of the man in you, *ma petite*, for this weak one’s sake!”

I did not understand then what I heard later, that my father knew, as he said this, that he had an ailment incurable, and would not be long with us at Chacquotte; though he lived longer than had been promised him. Indeed, it seemed as if he made himself live till I was ready for my charge. Ah, *mon Dieu*, these years! He finished well what he had begun—he taught me very perfectly—to row and swim and ride on horseback; he taught me to administer the affairs of the estate, keeping accounts, collecting rents, signing leases and overseeing repairs; all, that Félice should not be troubled. But above all, and to my greatest pride, he perfected me in the rapier play—he who had been a pupil of the great Desisles, and since then he had called out enough of his countrymen to keep his sword and his honor bright. “Never a fly will speck your scutcheon, if you keep your sword-arm free,” he used to say; and I was to be Félice’s sword-arm, since there was no man of her name, save one who had gone into exile during the stormy times and had never come back.

We would go, my father and I, up into the long gallery where it is always quiet, and there, little by little, I learned all he knew. I grew into a lanky girl, with arms like flails, too long for my height, but good in fencing because of the reach. By the time I came to give up the exercise with him I was almost my father’s match. I still keep up the practicing with old Jacques Carrelle, who learned it in the army, when he followed my father in the wars. And so the years sped—and the day came when Monseigneur my father had the little Félice and me brought to his bedside when the priest had given him the last absolution. Félice he kissed and bade be taken away, since she cried with a great terror at his strange, gray face and lips all stiff and drawn. But me he bade stay, stay beside him—close—close—and look always into his eyes—for he said: “I would have them shut

down under my lids that look in the eyes that were your mother's." And so I looked into his eyes until I knew that they saw no more. And soon they buried him; and Félice was the Lady Châtelaine of Chacquotte and I was left to be to her as her sword-arm, even as Monseigneur my father had said.

And now, dear my granddaughter, you are introduced to your *gran'maman*, whose confidante you are, even though you most probably never will be born. And you know how she came to be—and how her life passes in the breeding of pigs and geese and the draining of land, and the guarding, along all roads, of the adorable Félice—along all roads but one. I think there is one road along which the good God Himself could not guard a demoiselle who is born with flickering eyes. And when I see that flicker in her eyes—how it kindles an answering flicker in the eyes of all men—even in the wicked eyes, the burned-out eyes of the great and so evil old Seigneur of Château de Brune, whose lands join marches into the lands of Chacquotte—de Brune, even now mounting his great, black horse at our door—de Brune—

Félice has bidden me come and share her supper. She is gracious—at times—my sister who is my châtelaine. *Au revoir*, my little granddaughter-to-be. You have given me a charming hour of silent sympathy. Until tomorrow!

SECOND LETTER

June 5.

MY DEAR LITTLE ONE:

I began to write this in English, so that no one finding it could read it, but it will also serve as an exercise in the language, and that is well. You will profit by it, too, *ma chère*, even though you may not like it!

It is good to have a confidante when one is disquieted as I am disquieted this night. *Ma petite-fille*, how is it that when one is yet very young, with a freshness that is own cousin to the spring—how is it that there can be no youth and no spring in the heart? How

is it that when the spring is filling all the forest with young leaves, and all the heart with young dreams, that Félice, my sister, who is so young, lives so very far from the spring and from dreams? We sat at supper last night in the old oak salon that opens into the west garden—the west garden, where the lilies and the gilliflowers are budding—and there was a young moon, a little crescent of gold, behind the poplar trees—and my heart ached of it—oh, ached of the little gold moon and the white gilliflowers not yet blown! But Félice, my sister, of what did her heart speak—if there be a heart there, under that small, sweet bodice, with its gold broidery laced with blue? She spoke of what chance it was that the sickness of the wicked Seigneur de Brune, our neighbor, had held him from the court so long, and made his only possible holiday that daily ride to Chacquotte—"It gives occasion, this meeting day by day," said Félice, my sister; "and the demesne of Brune it is very broad, and she will be a great lady who is the lady of Brune!" And when I cried out on that, remembering the wicked face, so sick and yellow and old—*tudieu!* as sickly and as old to see as the dying toadstool in a cellar!—she laughed, and said that dying was in admirable taste when a rich old seigneur had wed a young wife with her life before her—and in taste he had been admirable always, the Seigneur de Brune. "If you would know how he is admirable," she said, "set him beside those huge, so *bêtes* Englishmen—those *détenus* who are amusing themselves here at the hunting through our Breton forests, till they are no longer suspects, and the king gives them leave to sail back from Calais—but look at them as they stride along, with a color like red apples, and the rough clothes of a savage, and eyes that look one down—"

I had not heard that English *détenus* were hunting our Breton forests—strangely they must look, indeed, beside the Seigneur de Brune, with his skin of the dying toadstool, if their skins be the color of red apples! And

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eyes that look one down—well, but they have never met, those English eyes, the little flickering flame in the eyes of my sister Félice! And, oh! she was fair, there in that young, spring twilight, my sister of the flickering eyes! She is like a flower now, gracile, delicate, bearing herself as a princess, her head high and her eyelids down, haughty even to me, as is, of course, only *comme il faut*—as it should be. Her hair is yellow and soft as a baby's, lying in tender little curls about her forehead. She is beautiful and noble, and what more would you? And she is the Marquise de Chacquotte et de Chambruse. Yet my heart is disquieted—for how can she, who is all these, turn in her spring and in the spring of the year to thoughts of a dying toadstool with a great estate tied to it—only to thoughts like that?

I must leave you now, my dear, to ride out over the estate. I, of course, shall not fear to meet any of those English *détenus*, unless I go to the village. I have never seen an Englishman and, of course, I don't wish to; and besides I do not think of any excuse for going to the village. *Au revoir!*

THIRD LETTER

June 6.

My dear, what do you think has happened? It is that I have met an Englishman! And because of that—oh, *chérie*, think shame of your grandmother, even if she has but one-and-twenty years—because of that I have caused to be brought to my room the old mirror from the gallery where the grand seigneur who was my father taught me the fencing; it is broken in a place where my foil once touched it when I was practicing the lunge, but is still better than the small, little glass that has always been large enough until now. But let me begin at the first of it.

When I went out to the stable this afternoon it was to find that Félice had taken my saddle-horse, Garçon, her own being lamed, and had gone to the village on him. So there was left for me only the old Blanchette, the white one, who

is trained to the saddle, but of little use because of her so bad habits. She stops and stays stopped, when perhaps you most want her to go; and that is not agreeable. Yet I took her rather than stay at home, and we set off. It has been making very warm of late; and instead of my dark, thick habit of wool I wore a little, light robe of sprigged muslin, the skirt made quite scant and the sleeves short, as is the fashion. It is important that you remember both the fault of Blanchette and the dress of me, since between them I met the Englishman.

For a time Blanchette behaved well enough and we went to several of the cottages. There is a new baby at the house Marchouz, and they cannot pay the rent; but Félice had sent them some bread and a little wine—she forgot to say anything about it, but I knew she would like them to have the things—Félice is well-loved by the poor people, for alms are always bestowed in her name, as is, of course, proper. I went also to the cottage of Veuve Lisa, who gave me a full hand of roses from her trellises. After that, Blanchette and I, we went to the outskirts of the estate, to see how the men are coming with draining the big western swamp—it will make a new farm for Félice, that. It was coming back from there that it occurred to me to take a short cut through the ford, instead of crossing by the bridge farther up the stream—the same Rivière Placide that flows past the château.

Now, at the ford the water is barely up to a horse's knees; but on either side it grows quickly deeper. We were about halfway across when Blanchette shied at the sound of a near shot and I found myself splashed and soaked to the waist in cold water. Then that miserable horse stopped; and for nothing I could do would she move a step, and at any moment the hunter might come from the woods. There sat I in mid-stream, my arms full of flowers, the hem of my poor, soaked frock swirling in the current; that was the difficulty, you see, for the moment Blanchette saw fit to move along, the

dress would no longer be hidden at all by the splashing water, and then, being very wet, it would—I could not think of my shocking appearance, with no splashing water to help me! So the hunter found me, gazing at the scenery; and he was an Englishman. They are not bad-looking as men go, those English; no—not though they are the color of red apples: they seem quite tall and wide at the shoulder, their voices are deep, and—their eyes twinkle. He did not mean me to see his eyes twinkle, I am sure, but it was not to be avoided. When he came up, which he did as soon as he saw me, he said in his big voice:

"Let me serve you, mademoiselle. What is amiss?"

"The horse, he has stopped, monsieur," I explain.

"So I see; oh, balked, you mean? I'll soon have him out!" and with that he laid his hand on the bit.

"I thank monsieur, but I do not wish to have him out," I said. Then he stood back and looked at me with great astonishment.

"You don't mean that you like to sit there!" he exclaimed.

"But no, monsieur, not very well."

"Then why the—"

"The view, it is so pretty—" truly, *chérie*, though this was quite, quite foolish, it was all I could think of to say, and I wanted him to go, but he did not so much as look at the view. Perhaps it is that the English do not care for scenery. "And it is so very warm," I said; "the water, it is quite comfortable to one's feet." Still I could see he was puzzled what to make.

"May I ask how long you intend to remain here, mademoiselle?"

"Monsieur may ask, certainly; but only the good God can answer." I was not abashed, but smiled at him pleasant.

"Mademoiselle," he said—and his eyes did not twinkle so much any more; they darkened a little, and steadied—but they were not less good to see—"mademoiselle, am I to serve you, or no?"

"But no, monsieur; *tout'suite*, Blanchette will go herself. There is

no need to hurry her." And with that I turned away as if in dismissal. The English are certainly slow to comprehend; for he only turned the color of a redder apple.

"Your pardon! You do not know me. I am an Englishman—"

"Monsieur! *Quelle surprise!*"

"My name is Gedron Westhall. I am among those detained as suspects by your king; but soon I trust to be free to return to my own country. I am mademoiselle's servant. May I now lead her out of the water?"

"I regret, monsieur, that it still must be my preference to remain as you see me—"

Just then that miserable Blanchette, she stamped her foot suddenly and hard, and a flood—oh! an ocean of the coldest water in the world, it splashed up all about me—so suddenly it came that I could not help but shake and shiver from my head to my foot as I sat—and the sun, it was dropping slow behind the high trees on the hill, and it was shadowy where I sat, all splashed and shivering—and the Englishman's eyes did not twinkle at all any more—and he said:

"Mademoiselle, it is not good to do a hurtful and a stupid thing when one has no reason. And for the hurtful and stupid thing mademoiselle is now doing I can see no reason whatever."

He may have been *bête* enough not to know that the water on my cheek was the water that imbecile of a Blanchette had splashed high up when she stamped. But I knew it; and so I did not lose any self-respect at all, as I must have lost it if—that on my cheek had not been water splashed up by Blanchette. And I said, very desperately, but with very much truth and reasonableness:

"It is true monsieur does not at present see why I cannot ride up out of the water. But if I were to ride up out of the water, it is possible monsieur might see a reason!"

And then—*tudieu!*—But the sun must have sent a ray back over the big hill, so did the Englishman's eyes lose their shadow and shine again; and as

for the color in his face—well, there may be apples in England so red as that color, but they do not grow in Brittany. And he said:

"Again pardon, mademoiselle. But when one is born a jackass—" and he loosed a cloak slung over his shoulders, for easier carrying—a big, rough cloak, with a clasp wrought of iron and shaped to a coat-of-arms—and he wrapped it lightly all about me—though I showed him how very wet it must become, and how wet he himself must become from striding so deep into the water of the ford—he wrapped the cloak all about me. And then he took the bridle of Blanchette. Blanchette is not altogether a fool; and when he laid his hand upon the bridle she entertained no doubt that the time had come to go out from the water and she went at once, and very agreeably.

When we were upon the bank the Englishman shook himself, as my water-spaniel does when he has come from his bath, and immediately he seemed to be quite dry and comfortable, as the spaniel does. And I said: "Where is it monsieur's pleasure I return to him the cloak he has so graciously—"

"And may I not have the honor of saving mademoiselle that trouble?" the Englishman said. "If mademoiselle would entrust me with her name and that of her château—"

I sat a long moment in such a stillness that I could hear it—yes, hear the stillness singing in my ears. And then—for it is not good to speak less than all the truth to one who is looking at you with truthful eyes—I said:

"My name is Jeanne, monsieur. They call me Jeanne de Chacquotte sometimes; but that is because I live at the Château de Chacquotte and serve my sister, who is the Châtelaine of Chacquotte and the younger daughter of my father. I have no name, monsieur, and I have no home—"

Little granddaughter, may it never please the good God that you have to speak words when every word cuts its way out from your soul with a little, sharp knife—yes, cuts its way up through the heart, through the throat,

through the lips, and leaves bleeding behind it the path it has cut. May it never be that the good God—

There was another moment when the silence it was to be heard, then—

"Mademoiselle Jeanne," the tall Englishman said, "will you leave this worthless cloak of mine, since it pleases you to give it back to me, there on the rocks that end that little island, yonder in the river? You may know—there are oak trees that grow—"

"Monsieur, I know the little island very well. It is that I row there often—one can see red sunsets there that it is good to watch when one is tired—"

"If I should chance to be at that island at the red-sunset time when mademoiselle rows to it to return my cloak, I shall count it an honor and a happiness to salute mademoiselle. Otherwise, the cloak is safe. Mademoiselle—I have the honor—"

His tall body stiffened then, and his brown right hand—the hand that must have taught others than the imbecile Blanchette that it is not good to disobey—the brown, strong, right hand went up to his forehead and held itself there, straight and firm.

"Monsieur!" I said—and wondered. "Monsieur! But that is the salute of a soldier—"

"I have been a soldier, mademoiselle. I know it to be the salute—"

"But, monsieur—it is a salute to a soldier!"

"To a soldier who is brave enough to face a great pain and not flinch, when it is a question of one's honor. Yes, mademoiselle—to such I give it—"

Oh, the silence!—I heard it and I heard it—but the word would not come. I—I knew what must come in its stead—for my eyes saw waveringly that strong figure there that did not waver—saw dim—and I could only lift my hand—not quite all the way—and Blanchette was merciful and bore me swiftly—swiftly—

There is a wind abroad tonight, *ma petite-fille*—not a very cold wind, for it is spring; yet it is good sitting by the casement that is all wide to the wind and the stars, to have the

warmth of a cloak close about me—the big, rough cloak of a soldier who may often and often have been folded in it, when he slept out under the wind and the stars—

There are clouds across the stars. It must not rain tomorrow—the sky, it must be red at the sunset time tomorrow— Oh, red as any apple on an English tree—the sky—

I am so warm and dull with sleep—yet how can I go to my bed when sleep comes so sweet here at the wide casement—where the spring stars shine—where the big cloak folds me close—

FOURTH LETTER

Ma petite-fille, this is perhaps the last letter that will be written to you by your *gran'-maman*—never-to-be! Yet I do not feel it will be so; for though the Seigneur de Brune has a good sword to his credit, yet mine is the wrist of the de Chacquottes, and it was a de Chacquotte that trained it—I am not at all afraid—and yet—

I must begin at the beginning and speak very quickly, for at moonrise old Jacques will be waiting with the little boat which is to take me to the edge of the west forest. It is by moonlight and by torchlight our work will be doing.

The beginning was the hour of today when the sun was first westering—it struck red across the poplars; and all the air flushed as red—as red as the apples of England. I gathered up the accounts I had tried to present to Félice, my châtelaine—though always when I try to present them she hums a little tune, or else drowzes, with her long, fringed lids across her eyes. I was leaving the salon when she bade me tell her where I went. I said, to the little isle of the oak trees—I would return before the hour of supper. But why to the isle of the oak trees? And at that her lids came wider, and I caught between them a flicker that I knew. And I knew some tale of the ford and of the borrowed cloak had stolen to the ears of Félice, my sister—

for she sometimes is more indulgent to the whispers of those who serve her than it would seem a great lady should be. So because there was no shame in the matter, nor anything to be concealed, I told her all plainly that I went to return the cloak an English gentleman, a *détenu*, had lent to me on the yesterday, when Blanchette had been stupid and disobedient, and had given me a wetting at the ford. Whereon Félice, my sister, opened her eyes quite wide, with the flicker in them very suddenly bright; and she cried that she also was minded for an hour in the evening freshness, and that it was surely her part to thank this so chivalrous Englishman who had served one who served her. She said it so, quite slowly, and the flicker was very bright. It did not dim as I rowed her across the reddening river, while the sweet, warm smells of twilight blew toward us on the little spring wind; and I watched that flicker and seemed to see the like and the reflection of it quiver in two steadfast, blue English eyes. And as I saw it I felt my heart grow tight—tight—in the grip of some cold, hard hand—and my throat and lips were dry. But I rowed very steadily and strongly, with the sweep of the oar taught me when I was very small by Monseigneur my father.

I saw the big figure, dark against the dark red sky, as we made the landing by the oak trees. He sprang to help me beach the boat. And I said to him that this lady was Félice, my châtelaine, Marquise de Chacquotte et de Chambruse. And she smiled up into his eyes as she murmured pretty, slow words, low down in her throat—smiled, while her beautiful eyes between their drooping lashes flickered—and then, even as I looked, the flicker fell and died, died into a stormy darkness. For it had never before, I think, chanced to Félice, my sister, to catch from the eyes of a strong man a look so cool, so steady—but *tudieu!*—a look to blow away the brightest flicker, as a north wind of the good God may blow out some angry spark.

Oh, how the sunset shone! My heart

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thanked the dear God for the shining sunset—thanked Him, with its tightness all flooded and warmed away. It did not matter that Félice, my sister, would not be for lingering there in the red sunset—no, not one little more moment than it took for me to lift the cloak from the boat—not even one moment, that I might thank him—it did not matter—oh, how could it matter, when the blue, English eyes had never once kindled from the flicker in the eyes of my sister, Félice! I pulled at the oars—oh, very strong and steady! and he understood, I think, that I could not lift my hand from the oars, when I raised my eyes where the river curves to its turning, and saw that, black against the red, red sky, he was standing with his brown right hand at the salute.

It was just as our boat made the turning of the river, and the tall man was yet clear against the red, red sky, that we met the boat which was bearing the Seigneur de Brune homeward from his hunting. And the Seigneur de Brune turned his hot and evil eyes to the big figure there, plain against the redness, and then to the eyes of Félice, my sister; and as the boats passed he said—very low and very clearly, with a thick laugh where the words broke. . . .

Oh, Monseigneur who was my father, give my wrist strength in this near hour, and make my eyes clear, and take pity quite out of my heart—that I may see when to strike, and so strike sure and deep!

I dared not look once at Félice, my sister—not once I dared look—when the two boats passed; but I pulled hard—hard and fast. For how dares another, even though she be sister and servant, look in the face of a demoiselle who had heard those words and that laughter, while he who spoke and laughed goes safe about his ways? I did not look, but as she left the boat—yet sure it was the shadow of the trees and the quick-changing lights—oh, it was these things I thought I saw, when I raised my eyes from my oars to—it was not that in that hour she could

smile—oh, not she who bears the name of Monseigneur my father!

I have not doubted once what was to do—no, nor did Jacques Carrelle, that old soldier, who knew my father, doubt, when I called him, and told him what words the Seigneur de Brune. . . . It was Jacques that took to him the message of how Mademoiselle Jeanne had made known his foul jest to the one kinsman, long in hiding but not beyond reach, whose right it was to ask answer for an insult offered to the Demoiselle of Chacquotte, and how that kinsman, who might not venture forth by day, bade the Seigneur de Brune bring his sword, at moonrise, to the edge of the west forest where the marches join—bring his sword and with his sword make answer. He is most things that are evil, this toadstool of a de Brune—but I think he is not a coward. Nor will fail the one named by Monseigneur my father as the sword-arm of Félice, my sister. He will not guess me out in this dress worn by my father, long ago—no, even in the clear daylight I think he would not guess, and in the moon shadows and in the torchlight it is sure.

I think that is the rising moon that makes so silver the shadows of the poplar trees. I am quite ready—oh, quite, quite ready!—and my rapier, that was the rapier of Monseigneur my father, is welcome in my hand. I am quite gladly ready—

It is a foolish thought for the last—but I would that when I stand waiting for the Seigneur de Brune I might be guarded from the night chill by that rough cloak of an English soldier—and I would that cloak might be lying on the sward where Jacques could lift and fold me in it close—if it should happen that the chill that is not the night-chill—

Mother Mary! But these are not a swordsman's thoughts! Ay, Jacques, I hear—I am ready—

FIFTH LETTER

There remains a little candle—I will

write while yet it burns. I think this will hardly reach your eyes, *ma petite-fille*, since it now seems the most certain thing possible that you will never achieve the being born. But if I bear the story with me, when presently I go, it would help to explain—if suddenly, somewhere, and alone, as it may happen, that I shall cease to be.

I was not afraid of Monseigneur my father, did you see? But indeed, I was not afraid! I would bless you for giving me life for only that one hour alone, when I stood with your rapier in my hand before the man who had offered insult to your daughter, and knew that I was not afraid. It was ill seeing, by only the flare of the torches they bound to the trees—for the trees swayed in a great wind that was rising, and one could not well catch any look of the eyes, or any sure direction of a sword, in the dark light and shadows. But of all you taught me, there was but the one thing I forgot—that a hurt wasp may yet sting. You taught me that—but I forgot, and am punished for forgetting, as is right. For the Seigneur de Brune has his sword hand still—yes, and his eyes also, though they are somewhat dimmed with long sinning. I was glad too soon—well, but it was a good thrust, mine, and he will not draw a breath of comfort for many and many a day. It will not kill him unless his so wicked life put poison to it; but he will not draw free breath for many a day. And I was glad too soon; for even as he gave, staggering, his rapier came at the lunge and a pain as of fire cut me where the arm and shoulder join—a keen, thin pain . . . but I stood quite still, quite straight, till they had borne him away. I motioned to Jacques that he dared not draw near me—and I stood quite straight till he was well gone.

We washed my wound in the dark river—the flooding river that talked through the trees. Jacques is no skilled surgeon—but his bandaging has held till now. I think now it has slipped a little, perhaps—there is a sense of warm wetness under its edge. I think I may

have thrown up both my arms when I cried out; and so it slipped.

How could I but cry out? It was so terrible, the face of my sister, Félice, who stood in the lighted door that I had thought to pass so quietly in the dark. Someone again had spied—had whispered—and she knew. Oh, let me forget what she said, lest somewhere and sometime, Monseigneur who was her father, you bid me tell again the words she said! Cruel as a snake is cruel, cold as a snake is cold—if they had done her bidding they would have put salt and hot iron to that new wound of mine, for that my sword had done hurt to the man who could make her lady of the Seigneurie de Brune. Insult? His words had rung sweet, since they told her of a jealousy that had been her surety—those hideous words had to her rung sweet. And now I was to go—go—go, or at dawn her dogs should—Dear God! let me forget! We had one father, and I have served her truly—Oh, let me forget!

I go now, in the little white boat that is my own. Whither I go tomorrow, the dear God knows; but I do not know. Tonight, to wait for the dawn, I go to the little island where the oak trees grow. The current sets thither—it will not be hard rowing, even though my left arm will suffer at its oar. The clouds do not quite hide the moon. I can see my way.

My little granddaughter-never-to-be—good-bye!

SIXTH LETTER

Ma petite-fille, they will tell you as they have told me, the stupid ones who do not know, that dreams do not come true. But when they shall tell you so, do you laugh, and you can say: "You do not know that my *gran'-maman* she had both bad and good dreams—and both the bad and the good dreams, they came true!"

It was a bad dream—oh, but the darkest dream I ever dreamed!—when last night, in the hour before dawn, my little boat touched shore at the isle of

the oak trees. I do not know how I guided it there; perhaps the angel that the good God gives to every one of us to lead us through this so strange world, wrought at the oars for me, when the wound-pain and the night-chill so numbed my shoulder that I could no longer row. I think I had not rowed for many minutes before my boat made shore. I thought I had made the boat fast—but one's fingers are not always steady in one's bad dreams.

I crept up the rocks to where the biggest of the oak trees made a shelter betwixt me and the storm wind; and I lay down among its gnarled roots. The rain found me, after a little; but that did not seem to matter very greatly. At least the pain in my shoulder was so occupying that I did not have time to care that it rained. When the rain ceased I found that I was looking upward at a great star—it was the morning star, and the sky was like the heart of a pink Provence rose. Why should I weep aloud at the great gold star in the rose-red sky—I, who had not wept when it rained on me in the dark night? It was as I wept I heard something heavy and quick come crashing through the little new growth of oak trees betwixt me and the river. And I said: "It may be *Félice*, my sister, has sent her dogs, even as she said—but how could they swim the river?"

He was so big against that faint gold sky—bigger than he had looked against the low red sunset. And his face was no longer the color of any apple, but of the white gilliflowers in the old garden.

"You here!" he said; "and alive!"

"I am not convinced that I am alive, monsieur; but I am here. Yes, undoubtedly—"

"Your boat was adrift. It came floating down: met me as I came."

"Then my guardian angel did perhaps not understand how to knot a rope, monsieur. He rowed me here—that is, the latter part of the way."

"You are a child, and mad. In the name of a reasonable God, why do you come to a lonely island in the river—alone—on a stormy night—"

"I thought I was about to cry, mon-

sieur. It is good to be quite alone when one cries."

"But why cry? . . . In the name of—"

"I but now asked myself why I cried. I was concluding it was because the only cow of *Veuve Lisa* died today a week. This is lamentable; but I also asked myself why I did not weep because of it when it happened a week ago?"

"It is imbecile . . . this thing you say. Speak truly—not as a child! I could all but shake a reasonable speech out of you, as one shakes it from a child."

"Monsieur! *Par grâce!* Not that shoulder—not where the wound—"

Ma petite-fille, I think at his cry at the sight of that blood, when my cape fell away under his big hand, I forgot for a while.

Oh, *ma petite-fille!* The feel of rough, rough cloth beneath the face! The feel of something underneath the cloth that beats against one's cheek—beats deep and hard and strong—God send it you, some day! God send it you! He sent it to me; and I found it so, when I stopped forgetting. And presently he knew. I think when I am arrived, by and by, in England, I will learn some English oaths. They rumble pleasantly in the throat, and seem very exactly to fit the word to the toadstool de Brune. Yes, and it may be I will also learn other English words—not oaths—that I heard as I lay with my cheek against that rough cloth, against that warm, great heart that beat beneath it.

"Dear," he said, "is the pain—?"

"What pain, monsieur? Oh, was there something that ached? But that was when it rained, in the dark, and I was all alone! But the sun shines now, monsieur—and the sunlight is so through and through my blood that I think you could read by me in a dark room! Monsieur—I have not quite learned that new little English word—"

"Dear," he said; "dear!"

I am so glad Gedron is English. Oh, *ma petite-fille*, you have cause so much to rejoice! I am well convinced Gedron will make a *beautiful* grandfather!

IN DEFENSE OF XANTHIPPE

By Katherine Louise Smith

TO speak ill of one who is dead and cannot defend him or herself is generally conceded to be a disgraceful deed. Yet from generation to generation this has been done in the case of Mrs. Socrates, née Xanthippe. People are deterred by no delicacy of feeling in pronouncing her a scold, and the fact that her descendants are scattered over the face of the earth appears no drawback. This seems an infringement on the laws of fair play.

Xanthippe's parents were poor but proud when Socrates sought her hand in marriage. She began life hampered with many drawbacks. There was her name, long, and beginning with that rarely heard consonant, X. She was the youngest of a noble family, and the rest of the alphabet had been exhausted in providing for her twenty-three brothers and sisters. What should the fond and loving parents call the little girl? Her father spoke in this wise:

"My noble spouse, we have come to X in the alphabet, and what shall we name the baby? Ha, I have it! Methinks Xanthippe would be good." And Xanthippe it has been unto this day. Would not any child be handicapped in her journey through life with such a name? Would she not always have to pay overweight on it when traveling, and would not the embarrassment of repeating it at the time of an introduction make her wish it were Maud, Mabel or Mary?

What could be her endearing nickname? Was it Xannie? Could it be Thippe? Not at all. The modest, shrinking child grew up to womanhood as Xanthippe, lived as Xanthippe,

died as Xanthippe. Centuries after her death the word is used to illustrate the alphabet as one of the few words beginning with the mellifluous, but seldom encountered, letter, X. She has, at least, that individuality, poor woman, and on that very account do we not owe her thanks, and should we not try to vindicate her character?

Socrates was an old man when he married, and far from a beauty. Xanthippe, much younger, would probably have taken pride in the comeliness of a husband, but Socrates went for the most part barefoot, was ungainly and dressed poorly. That his wife was of tender heart is evinced by her naming her first child Lamprocles. It will be seen without the use of X-rays (with which poor Xanthippe now shares the alphabet) that her object was to find a name capable of a pretty and endearing diminutive. Here was a woman who, even if she felt inclined to use an endearing name toward her flat-nosed, thick-lipped husband, would be obliged to call him Soc or Ratty. Is it any wonder then that she longed for some euphonious nickname for her first-born? Lammie it was, but tradition hath it that this petted and spoiled son repaid Mrs. Xanthippe's kindness by saying that though she had been a good mother to him—"did not kick him, did not bite him—yet her tongue was worse than her teeth."

That Xanthippe did use her tongue is ungainsayable, for this vindication of a much-abused woman shall be truthful if nothing else. However, she had ample provocation. Socrates was shiftless—an improvident husband, getting off maxims to suit all occasions. He

was choleric, a poor provider for his family, worked but little, and, worst of all, had frequent fits of sulks. Any court would have granted the wife a divorce a *vinculo matrimonii* on the ground of non-support and incompatibility of temper. Moreover, the poor woman had ample grounds for leaving Socrates on the plea of insanity. A man with a "demon"—the Greeks spelt it *δαίμων*, but it amounted to the same—and liable to fits of abstraction must have been trying to live with. The fact that Xanthippe, if pride prevented her from seeking a divorce, did not at least insist upon a separation, shows her faithful, loving character and self-denying devotion to her children. Alas, if she had obtained a divorce, the alimony, if any, would have been insufficient to support her. One cannot live on maxims, and maxims appear to have been her husband's only product.

Even up to the time of his death Socrates could hardly make both ends meet, and undoubtedly thought it cheaper to die for his opinions than to live for them, for all he possessed was six *oboli*, or about sixty-four cents. It is reported that his himation or cloak, the same which he and Xanthippe quarreled over, was so shabby that his friend, Apollodorus, sent him one to die in. Poverty is no disgrace to a man, but why did not Socrates work instead of talking so much? Philosophy is not always capital. Here was a man with a young and blooming wife and three children. He should have been earning their living, instead of philosophizing to young men. No wonder poor Xanthippe suffered. What woman with pride would not?

As an instance of their meager living, when Socrates was invited to join a literary court circle, he replied: "Four measures of flour are sold for an *obolus* at Athens, and water is to be had for nothing." Of course a prudent wife can make an excellent paste with flour and water, but had the husband, through sheer laziness, the right to deny his better half the delicatessen in the shape of frogs' hind-legs and peacocks' tongues that Xanthippe may

have longed for? This reply was not so astute as some think. Any right-minded person or out-and-out philosopher would have said: "Four measures of dried apples are sold at Athens for an *obolus* and water is to be had for nothing." A philosopher of the really, truly sort would have known that the expansory properties of dried apples are much more filling than flour. Undoubtedly Socrates led a lazy, shiftless life, and while he often dined out and obtained a square meal with wine and other good things, indulging in the impropriety of taking two plates of soup, the poor, neglected wife, Xanthippe, stayed at home with her flour, water and babies. In one respect only was Socrates kind to Xanthippe. He went barefoot and she was spared the indignity of darning his stockings.

As regards the story that Xanthippe upset the tea-table in a fit of wrath, any woman recognizes its absurdity. There is no question but she had great provocation, yet there is serious doubt about this action. Socrates had invited Alcibiades to tea. He had telephoned that Alcibiades would be there, just about four minutes before tea-time, when they lived a mile from a grocery store and the children were too young to send on errands. The improvident man had left no money with his wife wherewith to buy. It happened, too, on a rainy Monday, when the poor woman was planning to use the remains of Sunday's roast. Certainly Xanthippe had cause to complain; but that she upset the tea-table can be contradicted. No sane woman would upset a table spread with her best china.

On one occasion it is said that Alcibiades, who was the plague of Xanthippe's life, sent a box of sweetmeats. Xanthippe threw them under foot with indignation, whereupon Socrates retorted: "Well, you won't have any, either." This, mark you, when he had not offered any, and it was dubious whether he would have done so, since no woman who expected her share of a present would ruthlessly destroy it. It looks much as if Socrates expected to eat them alone and then prove him-

self a philosopher. Xanthippe was probably a woman of refinement. It must have been hard for her to have her husband's graceless friends, youths though they were, sit on the front porch and whittle all the morning while he discoursed to them on the beauty of self-effacement, self-abnegation and the like. At that very time, she was probably bending over a hot stove, and wishing the friends would go so she could ring the bell for dinner. Xanthippe's troubles with these friends of Socrates was a serious one. Both Plato and Xenophon, who were among them, mention this fact.

We now come to another source of woe to Xanthippe. Tradition was that Socrates had a wife, either before he married her or another at the same time. The name of this fair mystery was Myrto. She was the granddaughter of Aristides, and, in whatever capacity she figured, was a great big Greek cross to Xanthippe. That the philosopher's views on women were not exalted may be gathered from his advice to Lamprocles upon the subject of his relations with the fair sex. All of this must have been discouraging to Xanthippe, even if she had not a jealous disposition. Socrates may have had self-control, but there are those whose very self-control is aggravating. If they would only, in the language of the vulgar, "sass back" we might enjoy the trying occasion of discord much better.

Just at the time that his mother desired to send little Lamprocles to dancing-school, her aged husband conceived the idea that he would go himself. So the Socratic method was taught by Comus, and Socrates whirled his old bones in all the latest dances, while his wife looked on. This was undoubtedly philosophy.

About this time, too, Socrates started to learn music and practiced at home. Everyone knows how trying it is to listen to an amateur, especially if that person ought to be chopping wood and attending to fires at that very time.

There are several cloak stories told about the unhappy pair. The most

authentic one is that they had one himation or cloak between them. This Socrates wore away so that Xanthippe was obliged one time to take it forcibly from him in the street. If the truth were known, it probably happened that Mrs. Socrates was invited to tea, say at Mrs. Alcibiades's, as they appear to have been intimate and possibly at one time lived in adjoining flats. Socrates had promised to come home with the only cloak the young couple possessed. Mrs. Socrates did her housework, gave the children an early lunch and put them to bed; then arrayed herself for the social function, but no Socrates appeared. She could not go without the cloak, and it was too late to send regrets. What could she do?

Xanthippe did what any reasonable woman would do. She went after Socrates, expecting to find him at his usual place of discourse, sitting on a barrel, eating cheese and crackers and philosophizing to the habitués of the grocery store. The Alcibiadeses were a wealthy, aristocratic family. It was a privilege to be invited to one of their feasts. The reputation of her family was at stake. That she was obliged to take the coat forcibly was not her fault but his. Could Xanthippe appear at the door cloakless, have the august footman bawl out: "Mrs. Xanthippe Socrates"—and not be covered with confusion? No! far better be covered with a cloak. As it was, we see that Xanthippe was obliged to walk. Possibly Socrates could not longer get credit at the livery stable.

It is related that Xenophon, after Socrates's death, felt obliged to write an "In Memoriam," while another man wrote "An Apology." To a woman of pride it was hard that her husband's actions should be so questionable as to need "An Apology." In regard to the "In Memoriam," Xanthippe, if allowed, might have furnished many personal reminiscences and she certainly should have had a royalty on the book. Socrates was never introduced to Xenophon. When the latter was a little boy, Socrates stopped him with a stick in the street and asked if he knew "where

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one could get men." When the frightened child could not tell, Socrates said: "Follow me." This must have occasioned great anxiety to the boy's mother, who had probably warned her son not to follow strange men in the street. This was another mortification to Xanthippe, who may have seen in the evening paper headlines like the following:

ATTEMPT AT ABDUCTION

When the little son of our esteemed townsman, Mr. X. Y. Xenophon, was on the public highway, an eccentric man who gave the name of Socrates engaged the boy in conversation and afterward urged the child to follow him. We congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Xenophon that they are again in the possession of their child, and we feel the public welfare of our village demands investigation of such conduct. The man Socrates is a notorious character and parents are warned to be vigilant.

A newspaper reporter, named Phaedo, tells that when Xanthippe sat with a baby in her arms in the jail near Socrates she began to cry. He seemed unmoved when she told him it was the last time she should see him, and she was denied even the privilege of the last word, which in all ages has been a woman's prerogative. Socrates had no life-

insurance and left Mrs. Xanthippe with young children. Burdened with this family she could have few chances to marry again. She had the prospect of a long widowhood and the feeling that her children's lives would be overshadowed by the tragic death of their father. It was decidedly unpleasant for her that he did not die of heart-failure, or some other respectable disease. No wonder the chroniclers tell us Xanthippe beat her breast as she walked, for Socrates was not as generous as Shakespeare: he did not leave Xanthippe his second-best bed—probably because he had none.

One convincing proof that Xanthippe does not deserve the contumely ages have heaped upon her is the circumstance that history always repeats itself. Has there ever been a woman so maligned? That there has not is a self-evident refutation. Poor Xanthippe! born at the end of the alphabet, married to a dog-featured, non-supporting philosopher, thy lot was a hard one. In the eternal fitness of things it may be proven that thou wert wiser than Socrates, and a reaction may set in, at last, in thy favor, which will vindicate thy sorrows as they ought to be vindicated, even at this late date.



ABSENCE

By Ethel Allen Murphy

O LOVED one, linger not, nor leave me long,
 For lo! while sunbeams spend themselves, I wait,
 And twilight finds me watching at the gate
 With yearning heart, and aching love and strong.
 The days croon out their idle summer song;
 My garden, which you found so bare of late,
 Is blossoming with all the summer's freight;
 It lacks not pansy blooms nor fragrant throng
 Of roses, nor the hint of buds untold,
 Which hoard for you their treasures of pure gold;
 Each morn I look to gather them for you,
 Each noon I question mutely of the sun;
 But when you come not, and the day is done,
 With patient hope I bind my thoughts anew.

THE CONQUEST

By Mary Hastings

IT was a radiant April afternoon, tender, joyous, inspiring. Nice was a shimmer of color and light. The blue sea at her feet was sparkling like a sapphire in the sun, and behind her white pleasure-houses gleamed the silver of olive slopes and the rosy billows of flowering almonds that the terraced hills upbore to break into a froth of bloom, like sculptured spray, against the turquoise sky.

Philippe Vincens sauntered down the gay promenade with delight of the day's beauty in his young eyes and disgust at its lure in his young heart. April was a deceitful minx who made a business of promising a great deal more than life could possibly fulfil, his five-and-twenty years declared. Let her please men's eyes, but away with her meddling with a man's soul and quickening it to such restless stirring of strange expectancy and vague desire! Accept the world as it was in its interesting reality and for pity's sake have done with the distracting illusions about it!

Then he looked up and saw a girl approaching, wheeling an invalid chair. There was an invalid in it, of course, but Philippe could scarcely have told anything about that—he was aware only of a slender slip of a girl, all grace and delicate beauty, with blue, blue eyes like the dreaming sky and rippling hair like the sunlight that sparkled in its meshes. She was a flower of a girl; she was the spirit of spring; she was April incarnate.

Impulsively Philippe turned and followed, keeping a little behind and to the left, that he might watch her profile as she glanced out at sea. He thought he had never seen anything so sweet and

pure and maidenly in all his years. The first glimpse had told him that she was American, but as alien in her exquisite appeal to the vigorous, self-assertive young womanhood he had met as a nymph to a Nimrod.

Presently she wheeled the chair next a shady bench, where she sat down and began to read aloud to the worn, gray-haired man with her—a poem in herself of daughterly devotion! Allotting a proper absorption in the task, Philippe felt that he could increase his passings by till a vacancy in a neighboring bench offered him a refuge. There, behind a newspaper, he lingered, and when the girl rose he followed at a judicious distance while she wheeled her charge to an hotel. At the door the invalid forsook the chair and leaning on the girl's arm made a slow way within. They were staying, then, at the Palace, and Philippe—ah, infinite regret!—was at the Grand. There wasn't a doubt in the world but that he had fallen as deep in love as a young man can fall on an April day, at mere sight of a pretty, graceful creature with blue eyes and a haunting profile! And Lady Fortune was kind, for suddenly she flung into the young man's path two smiling, astonished friends, with outstretched hands and voluble greetings.

"My dear Philippe—you here?" cried the young Count de Valincourt, and his charming wife seconded, "We thought you at Como—wanderer!"

"Ah, Como was dull—all tourists and German brides! And you—are you here for long?"

"Three days more or so. We are birds of flight. Are you staying here? No? Where then? . . . And alone?"

Join us, *mon ami*. We shall be delighted. How is it that we have not met you before?"

And so it divinely chanced that Philippe sat at dinner with the Valincourts at the Palace that evening, murmuring most absent-minded remarks and watching with all his eyes the blank frame of doorway opposite. When she came, on the invalid's arm, he caught his breath for sheer loveliness of the vision—a vision in a white Empire frock that showed tiny, white, satin-slipped feet, a vision with soft, round arms and slender throat and golden hair piled high on the young head in shining puffs tied with a gay blue ribbon that matched the blue eyes beneath. And to his infinite joy the vision was exchanging a slight bow with the Countess de Valincourt!

The Count, with a chuckle, drew attention to Philippe's rapturous absorption.

"But how beautiful she is!" the young man pleaded in merry extenuation.

"Ah, yes! It is necessary to be beautiful to support a gown of that mode. For me, I detest the Empire!" the Countess replied.

How could even a woman talk of frocks when it was a question of eyes and hair and delicate white hands! The invalid, Vincens saw, had rather a finer presence than had appeared that afternoon. Though worn and pinched with illness, his face, above the black and whiteness of his evening dress, would have possessed a certain distinction but for weakening lines of irritability. He leaned toward his companion across the table, shading his eyes with his hand.

"You see he eats really nothing." Philippe became aware of the Countess's voice in carefully lowered French. "It must be that he dines in his room and but goes through the form of it here for pride."

"He can see so little?"

"Ah, nothing, almost nothing. It is a blur to him—a fog."

"What! He is blind?" cut in Philippe. Ah, that accounted for the pathetic shadow in those gentle blue eyes! "The father of that mademoiselle?"

"Mademoiselle *rien*! That is the wife, Madame—what is it?—Madame Parker."

Ah, April, April, deceitful jade! And cruel Lady Fortune! A bad lot, both of you.

"So? . . . She seemed so young for his age," observed Philippe, all pleasant calm without, while within raged uproar and despair.

Presently, after interminable courses of abominable viands, he found his gaze dwelling on the strange pair with new interest. A madame! At least it flung a piquant spice of inquiry about her. Wedded in her youth to age and illness, how could she yet look out on the world in that unclouded innocence like a shepherdess of dreams? Madame or not madame, she was young, lovely and feminine to her finger-tips. In spite of her charming unconsciousness of manner, the eyes of the world mattered to her—she had made a *toilette ravissante* to dine with a blind husband!

"Monsieur Vincens has ten eyes for the blonde *Américaine*," declared the Countess.

"And the husband has none!" laughed the Count. "Congratulations, *mon cher*."

"You are a pair of scandalous worldlings," Philippe reminded them tranquilly. "But that *petite* madame is a picture—a dream."

"She is a pale girl in a white frock," the dark-eyed Frenchwoman pronounced. "But see—they are going to have coffee without. Come and I will introduce you. They do not seem to be acquainted here. We but spoke by chance."

And so Lady Fortune, in a little whim of apology, permitted Philippe to drink coffee beside his vision, to pass sugar to her and put down her empty cup, and to listen to her voice, which, when he had heard it, he knew was just the voice in all the world he would have chosen for her, so sweet and soft and silver clear.

She spoke but seldom; it was her husband, delighted at an audience, who did the talking. The man made an immense appeal to Vincens's suscepti-

bilities; it was pathetic to see his worn face light up with a narrative of things of other days, of boats and horses and hairbreadth escapes, all the while his weak, uncertain hands made a nerve-racking business of lighting a cigar. At the end, as the group stood about in little detachments preceding dissolution, Philippe found himself on the edge of it with Mrs. Parker.

"Your husband interests me so," he told her with his boyish directness. "I noticed him this afternoon and I have seen his name before. Is he, by any chance, the Frederick Parker who writes?"

She turned to him in a little rush of eagerness. "Have you read my husband's book?"

"Alas, no! I but saw a review to-day."

"Oh, I am *so* sorry!" Then she caught herself up with a little laugh at her own impetuosity. "I mean that it would have been such a pleasure for him to meet someone who knew it. It is just out—and there are not many who read science."

"I will read it at once," the young man announced, inspired. "Have you a copy with you?"

"Yes, indeed. But it is very long—two volumes."

And very dull, the review had drearily declared.

"May I take it? I could read it quickly and discuss it with him and I would be very glad to do such a small thing for him."

"Why, it would be very kind of you," she said in irrepressible, child-like pleasure, yet a little wondering. He did not give the wonder time for expression.

"May I have it at once? Tonight?"

"If you really wish. I can bring it down any time."

"He mustn't, of course, know that I borrowed it from you, must he? I would have read the book anyway, when opportunity came. I am so interested in science."

Ah, Philippe, *perfidie*, with that shining sincerity in your dark, eager eyes!

Her assent was a seal of intimacy.

An hour before they had been strangers, a half-hour acquaintances, and now two blessed minutes of time had transformed them into fellow conspirators!

Later she came down with a stout volume in each arm, lingering a delicious moment to laugh at their heaviness and thank him in her impulsive, girlish way. Apparently it seemed to her natural, though immensely kind, that he should do this for her blind husband. He reflected grimly, as he toiled through the warm, starry night over the horrible volumes, that he had probably made the impression of a pleasant, obliging young fellow of quick sympathies. He did not at all flatter himself that he was haunting her dreams. She was sleeping very comfortably below while he turned pages.

But the morning brought its reward in the keen pleasure of the invalid and the wife's rosy reflection of delight. Vincens spoke deferentially of the work, admired its breadth and depth of wisdom and quarreled judiciously with enough points to insure a vigorous defense and a continuation of the argument apparently for all the days that he cared to remain.

At the first opportunity Mrs. Parker came directly to thank him. "Her husband was *so* happy! It had been such a *kind* thing for him to do!"

Her quick gratitude, her pretty flush, were all for his kindness, Philippe recognized with rueful amusement. He had not always been adored for his goodness of heart.

The book had gloriously smoothed the way for an increasing intimacy. The Count and Countess, having played their part in the little drama, whirled on to Monte Carlo with a gay banter of warning, and Philippe was left to the devices of the April days. Nothing could have been more open, more appealing, than the pleasure Parker took in the Frenchman's society. He had a pathetically eager air of showing him off to his wife and to the world; the woman's devotion was a duty that redounded to her own credit, but the attention of this charming young man

was a personal tribute, an intellectual conquest.

The wife welcomed him happily for her husband's sake. When he met her alone, he found in her always that same quick, friendly response, a baffling simplicity that took his comprehension and sympathy for granted. She increasingly impressed him with her thorough ignorance of life, yet as having some quaint understanding of her own about it. He learned that she had been married three years, for two of which her husband had been blind, and from something she let fall he gathered that Parker's sight was failing at the time of the wedding.

Why under the firmament of wonders had she married the man? For love? Such love as would have made that marriage would have pulsed with rare ardor and suffered with rare intensity. Not even the ashes of such fires were discernible; compared to the tragedy that would have looked from the eyes of passion, the sorrow on this woman's face was no more than the shadow of a cloud on a brook. She was all tenderness and patience, a little saint of resolute good cheer and unwearying well-doing, but a very daughtery saint on whom the rôle of wife sat with quaint humor. And Parker, to Vincens's thinking, was not the stuff great passions are made on. At best he must have been rather an arrogant, didactic sort whom Philippe would have fled as the plague, and illness, while it had rendered him pathetic, had betrayed him into a horrible irritability that undid the dignity of his deep misfortune.

Was it for money then? Vincens's practical French mind argued that her charm should have secured greater luxury and less encumbrance.

One thing he learned to his infinite happiness. Her name was Delight. Delight! He repeated it tenderly to himself a hundred times a day. Was ever such name for an April girl? Delight! Yet how little of it shone into her gray routine of days as she guided her husband for short walks and wheeled him on longer ones, reading

aloud for hours and taking notes for the new book he was to work on when health returned, or spending whole half-days alone with her embroidery while he slept or took treatment!

It was pathetically lonely for such exquisite youth and Philippe, thrilled with a complexity of pity, did his charming best to lighten the situation for them both, with such fine progress as the days slipped past that any observer would have judged him an amiable relative or time-tried friend. Protesting that but for them the place was a desert of boresome tourists, he engaged Parker in long conversations, tried his hand at reading aloud to them both, brought them every scrap of news or gossip that might interest, and did every little service that his eager brain could conceive, all with the most casual appearance of chance.

And Lady Fortune proved gloriously his friend. One evening he discovered that they had never taken the Corniche drive.

"Ah, but you must!" he exclaimed. "It is the spirit of the Riviera. The view—" he stopped, remembering.

"It is too tiring for my husband," said Delight quickly. "It is far too long."

"I have told you again and again to go," the husband protested. "I can get on perfectly well with Doctor Herrick, but women like to make martyrs of themselves."

"I really didn't care so much to go alone," she said.

Was her naïveté genuine? Vincens asked himself a hundred times a day. He only knew she was a mystery he adored.

Now he offered with most deceptive calm, "I should be glad to accompany you if I would be at all better than solitude," and waited, fearfully, wondering how far American freedom extended. The wife, too, seemed to hesitate, but the husband settled the matter with heartiness.

"I would appreciate it very much, Monsieur Vincens. I am sorry I can't go about more and give my wife the pleasures she might enjoy."

He had the air of saying to his wife, "See how much this delightful young man will do to oblige me! Invalid as I am, I make friends!"

"He is an imbecile, that man," said Philippe to himself with cheerful conviction. "If you will be ready then at nine, madame, we will take Cook's coach"—he wanted desperately a private carriage, but dared not venture—"and take the Corniche to Mentone and after lunch return by the lower road."

A day with her out-of-doors, in sun and wind and gladness! Was it *possible*?

He was in agony till he saw the sun emerge that morning, in despair till she appeared at nine. They set off on the front of the coach with two English ladies on the rear seat for fellow-passengers. His heart was beating as no schoolboy's ever beat at the nearness of that slender figure in the loose pongee dust coat. There were touches of light blue on the coat and her little hat was blue, and she carried a pongee parasol with a big blue bow on the handle. This pretty frippery of costume seemed the only hint of coquetry in her; she loved charming things as frankly as a child, yet maintained an incredible unconsciousness of her appearance in them.

It was a heavenly day, all blue sky and sunshine and breeze and birds. Higher and higher the road led them, past the nearer hillsides flecked with white villas shining out among black cypresses, past gray olive slopes and vineyards and orchards of pear and peach in bridal bloom, while below the Mediterranean lay like lapis lazuli in the shadow of the hills.

The English ladies appeared immersed in Baedeker and occasionally their voices proclaimed that here Hannibal had led an army or there the Romans had built a fort. To Philippe's thinking, Hannibal with all his hosts was a petty event compared to this excursion with Delight.

They lunched on the terrace of the Britannique in a wistaria-framed bower, and then put in the time until the departure of the coach in strolling about

the sea walk and exploring the lace shops where Philippe expertly bargained for her and carried her parcels with a novel thrill of possession. He had an immense sensation of adventure in it all, of fairylike romance. They were two children together, laughing and talking, happy, buoyant, at ease. Insensibly they slipped into confidence and the conversation became more narrative. Philippe told her a little of his life, of the alternating work and play of his Paris existence, of the English mother who had died in his boyhood, of the vast porcelain factory that had since increasingly engrossed his father and to which he must presently go back, and in return he won a glimpse into Delight's girlhood, spent in some mysterious region known as Kentucky, an orphaned existence in the care of an aunt, yet merry with simple pleasures, young friends and laughter. Then this unexplainable marriage!

They drove back along the coast, through the opal splendor of sunset, while a stiller mood, a shared sense of confidence and sympathy, wove its web about them.

From that day Philippe's emotion took on new power and purpose. He neither reasoned nor planned nor tried to put into logical sequence the thousand and one suggestions whirling in his mad brain; he only knew that he loved with all his heart and soul and strength and that all the passion and poetry in him was a consuming fire on the altar of a lovely child-woman with changing eyes and tender lips. She was more wonderful to him than the heavens above and the earth beneath and dearer than all the treasure in King Solomon's mines. His ecstatic fancy veered continuously about her, now kneeling in humility at her feet, now tumultuously clasping her in his arms. He worshiped, adored, revered, desired! To lose her, to leave her, would be desolation. He did not for a moment entertain the thought; he meant to let no chance or circumstance or misplaced scruple separate them.

Diligently he played the part of the gay young friend, interested, sympa-

thetic, *bon enfant*, but the fire of his love for Delight shone in his eyes when he looked at her, and the pain of his love—for there were long, long, sleepless nights and bitter hours of thwarted longing—deepened his voice to her.

Did she divine? She became shyer, more aloof, more inseparable from her husband, and Philippe's spirit sank like lead only to take heart of hope. He would not, for all his desire, have had her come too tamely to hand.

Then one evening, when Parker as usual had early retired, Philippe and Delight strolled with a casual group from the hotel down to the shore to see the moonlight and wandered away from the others out on the sands, where the waves rolled lazily up to their very feet and with low, liquid murmurings dissolved in a soft languor of foam. The beauty and mystery of the night, the starry silence, the wide sea, the vast, moon-flooded spaces of air and earth and water, lay about them like a dream. Delight stood thrall to the spell, gazing out at sea with rapt, absent eyes, an ethereal figure in her white gown, a little priestess of mystery, an eternal symbol against the sea of time.

Philippe's blood was racing in its courses. He could not take his eyes from her; the pain and joy of all the world was beating in his heart and racking it with a longing as vast as the sea and as resistless. When her hand rose to put back a softly blowing lock, an ungovernable emotion made him catch it in his and carry it to his eager lips.

An instant she was motionless in a shock of amaze, then her hand fled and she moved away. He took a quick step forward to face her, his eyes shining, his face pale.

"*Je t'adore!*" he said huskily, yet with vibrating distinctness.

For a long breath's space they faced each other so, wide-eyed terror and question in her gaze and in his all the fierce, tender, long-hidden impulses of his love, with joy at the confession and fear at its irrevocable daring.

Then as if fleeing an enchantment, she turned from him and started

breathlessly back to the hotel. He followed in trepidation, uncertain, waiting to read her face. At that moment other voices reached them and a group of English people strolling past checked the words trembling on his lips. They were obliged to walk together in some semblance of companionship through the crowded street. His own confusion of spirit left him scant clearness to interpret her silence and averted face.

"Madame!" he said at last in a low tone.

"Do not speak to me!" she gasped, with a gesture half denial, half appeal.

The lights of the hotel were streaming before them and a porter sprang to open the door. She passed in quickly without a backward look.

"Good-night, madame," said Philippe formally, and "Good-night," came faintly from her in response.

Treading on air Philippe strode back out into the night.

She had answered him, she had not denied him! He flung back his curly, boyish head and smiled radiantly up at the good stars that aid lovers so. What a night for love it was! Why had he stood awkwardly by like a sheepish boy and let her slip away? Her flight was but the impulse of a startled girl, and by every canon of courtship he should instantly have followed up his avowal and taken advantage of her trouble and confusion to overwhelm her with his ardor and override the questions that were now opening to her alone.

What counsel would the night bring her? She would be indignant and alarmed, suspicious of him and watchful of herself. Decidedly he had acted like a fool!

And yet she was so delicate, so shy, that more of an *éclaircissement* might have driven her from him in panic. He must be gentle, considerate. Perhaps, after all, he had been wise, and starry solitude and the memory of his kiss would plead for him better than his passion-hurried tongue.

He knew little sleep that night—a night of whirling dreams and intoxicating, unreasoning happiness.

Morning came; hot, drowsy, wind-

less. The hills seemed to quiver in a tremulous mist of heat. The sun blazed down with such unsparring fervor that the eye could hardly meet the brilliance of the scarlet geraniums about the white hotel.

Philippe made fifty toilets, fidgeting from gray to white, and sending his man flying for a boutonnière only to discard it in dissatisfaction. He could not wait for the breakfast hour, yet it found him perturbed and unready, excitedly striding his room. Of course, so he sagely prepared himself, she would be distant to him and cold to iciness.

It was something of a shock, therefore, to find her gay and amiable, more at ease, decidedly, than he—a shock and a disillusionment. He did not like her so prepared, so *mondaine*; he loved her as *jeune fille* and such sudden adequacy took a shade or two off the roseate color of his dream and sent his eyes backward over the past to see if he had read her aright. Women were all alike in the matter of intrigue, he reflected sadly over his solitary cigar. You make them a declaration in the moonlight and—*parbleu!*—they meet you as unconcernedly over the morning marmalade as if you had mentioned the price of fish!

Yet if he had received plenty of words he could recall no glances from her. Her eyes had flitted past elusively—a mere sparkling surface, a shining veil. She was evidently excited. It might be that her airy handling of the situation was the desperate courage of timidity at bay.

She had slipped away with her husband after breakfast and at noon he learned that they were lunching in their room—so unusual a circumstance that it was clear that she was avoiding him. Did it augur good or evil? Of the *femme américaine* he knew little, but surely all femininity was femininity, hearts were hearts and youth was youth, and tied to an old, unloved, unlovely invalid she could not fail to respond to the ardor and eager worship of his young heart.

Of the husband, Vincens's French directness made short work. Not the

moral sense of a mouse pricked him to scruple. Parker would be really a gainer, for he would enjoy the advantages of Philippe's highly advantageous society, and the young man worthily resolved to make life as pleasant and interesting as possible to the poor old fellow. Decidedly the affair would be to everyone's benefit all around!

But would she come down to dinner? She came, very white and silent. Parker grumbled over the outrageous weather and Vincens forced himself to an appearance of conversation, ranging at random from one topic to another. After the meal he slipped his arm through the elder man's with that familiarity that sat so gracefully upon him, and they smoked their cigars together upon the terrace, while Delight—oh, elusive April heart!—went off to write letters in the salon.

Parker was tired and soon decided to go in. For the thousandth time, as he bade them both good-night, Philippe wished that it were the wife and not the husband who understood French, but he had prepared a note for such an emergency and silently extended it to Delight. Her hand hesitated, then accepted it.

For an hour of racking suspense Philippe waited on the terrace. His note had been brief: "I will wait here for you. I beg you to let me speak to you."

She came at last, shrouded in a white cloak with a tissue scarf over her bright hair. Accepting in silence the arm he formally offered, she let him lead her to a more unfrequented corner of the terrace overlooking a little garden. He glanced down on her in triumph and the man of the world in him smiled at the pretty, reproachful protests those soft lips would frame. She was feminine to her finger-tips—those finger-tips that were then causing such exquisite commotion in that unrevealing arm of his!

At the edge of the terrace they paused and without looking at each other stood staring out over the bay, while the consciousness of the situation throbbed in the stillness about them. Now that the great moment was at hand, his carefully

prepared speeches were streaming from Philippe like chaff in the wind.

"Let me thank you for coming," he said at last in a voice that trembled. "I felt that I must speak to you, must ask you to forgive my presumption"—Ah, Philippe, adroit one!—"forgive it because of the love . . . that is my life to me. Are you angry with me? Ah, no, you must understand! I throw myself on your mercy. Delight," his voice lingered on the word and made it a caress and a prayer, "Delight, you are not angry with me? It is fate that speaks . . . my destiny that puts my life into your two white hands! You will be forgiving, be kind? You are all the earth and all the heaven to me . . . Delight!"

After a moment, "I am not angry," she said.

"Ah, you are an angel to me! You do understand! You do," his tone rang with the joy of his hope, "you do . . . care . . . a little?"

She still gazed out at the distant sea. Then she gave a quick little nod of affirmation.

Of such strange dual stuff are the simplest of us made that somewhere in Philippe a remote inner-man gave that moment to grief. That his April lady of dreams should be so mortal, should yield so pliantly! Before he could move, in the queer shock of that surrender, he heard her voice.

"I think it is only right to tell you so," she was saying in a very steady little tone. "I have been thinking and thinking about this, and truth seems the only way. It cannot hurt us—and it may help a little. Love is too—too sacred to deny. We must just face things now honestly and bravely."

The speech was a vague bewilderment to his excited brain. "Surely truth is the only way," he answered gently, trying to meet her mood. Some instinct told him not to touch her.

"It is no use now to say that it ought never to have been," she went on miserably, still staring out into the moonlight, her hands tensely gripped before her. "It is I who must ask forgiveness, for I should have known better. I am a

married woman and I should have been wise for you. But I was blind—blind—blind—until it was too late!"

"It was too late from the moment that I had seen you," he said resolutely, yet with a tender smile for her. *She* to be wise for him—this child-woman!

"I never, never thought; and then afterwards I looked back and it seemed as if you were always . . . different. You made everything different. I trusted you so and thought that I understood, and I was too unreasonably glad to question. But I should have known!"

She reiterated it in a passionate remorse that Philippe thought was high time to allay. He felt for her momentarily something of the pity that a fowler might feel toward the fluttering bird in his snare. But her quick gesture checked his own. She turned to him for the first time and lifted strange, starry eyes to his.

"Don't think I'm sorry for myself! It brings sadness, but it will be a wonderful memory to help me through the days. And I have so much to go through with. You don't know. But for you—you are so young—there is my grief! That you suffer!" She caught her breath sharply while wonder held him dumb. "But you will forget me. You will not let this sadden or grieve you, but think of me always as a living prayer for your happiness . . . and as someone whose life is the gladder for having known what . . . love . . . truly is in all its sweetness and deepness. . . . That is why I came down tonight. I thought it could be only right to speak truth to each other this once. The words do not matter. It is the way we take this thing that has come to us that matters. . . . But *can* you forgive me? You are just a boy and I let your kindness to my husband bring you to this sorrow!"

Forgive her! Philippe could have knelt in sudden abasement and kissed the white hem of her cloak. His exquisite lady of dreams! His bright, brave April heart that lived in the purity of its own light, undarkened by one shadow of the world's great blackness! Thank God, oh, thank God that not a

word of his had pierced that irrecoverable simplicity! Yet, oh, the pain of its unquestioning renunciation!

"Tell me," he said in sudden fierce command, "did you love—your husband?"

Her eyes told him, her lips in their very pitying reluctance. "I was so sorry for him," she said. "You don't know how dreadful it was for him—he was so alone and there was no one who cared. And I was alone too—and he had always been such a *kind* guardian to me. I couldn't have him face darkness alone! Perhaps I mistook—myself—a little. But I thought God meant that service for me . . . and I think now he did. My husband needs me more than ever now, for—oh, it is *too* hard, and he doesn't know!—he will never get well. These are all the days he has in the world and I want to put all the happiness into them I can! . . ."

"You have been so good to him and you have helped us both so," the gentle little voice went on, after a pause, more pathetic in its sweetness and steadiness than if it had been shaken with tears, "I shall hold the happiness of these days shut in my heart to keep it from loneliness. It is all wonderful to me. And you must think of me happily—but not for long. You are a boy and will love again. I will not have a memory of me hurt your life."

He looked down at her unashamed of the tears that stung his eyes.

"I love you, love you, love you!" he said. "I am not a boy and I will never forget you. I will remember you and wait for you all the days of my life."

The radiance that shone in her eyes was quenched by instant pain. "Oh, we must not," her pitying indignation cried, "we *must* not ask happiness at any sacrifice to another!"

"I do not ask any sacrifice," Philippe answered quietly. "But I wait—*toujours!*"

She looked away from him over the roses.

"When you come down in the morning I shall be gone," he said. "I will leave a note to your husband with my address whenever I can be of service to you. From time to time you will let me send just a rose—a word? . . . No? . . . As you will. That can make no difference. And now will you say good-bye to me here?"

He did not ask her hand, though he knew she would not have withheld it from him.

"Good-bye," she said, with a little catch of her breath. "My husband—will miss you. Good-bye—Philippe."

He stood motionless, with uncovered head, watching her return along the moonlit terrace to the blotting shadow of the hotel. For all the poignancy of that moment and its sharp prescience of bitter hours to come there ran through his veins a strange riot of exquisite joy. He flung back his head and looked up at the stars and his heart beat in exultant time with their great harmony. Ah, Delight, Delight! They were true, then, the things of the spirit! Faith and goodness were deep realities. The innocence of one woman's soul, like the April moonlight, ensilvered the world for him.



FIRST FAIR MAID—Why are men like mosquitoes?

SECOND FAIR MAID—I can't guess; why?

FIRST FAIR MAID—They are easier to catch after a full meal.

SALVAGE

By Helen Kane

HE tossed the half-burned cigar from the window and leaned out. Below, the lights of Central Park were paling in the dawn; and a breath of freshness came from the East River, hinting of the sea beyond. But day brought no light on the problem he had been trying to solve since midnight. One thing only was clear: he must go to Ruth—she had never failed him yet. And all through the daily routine, in which his terrible perplexity had to be steadily set aside, this thought interpenetrated everything—Ruth never failed him.

"A sudden call out of town," he said in the office. He would be back in two days—or possibly three. If any important transaction came up, wire Thornton at Newport.

How the train crawled! Stops were certainly longer than usual—or necessary. A dozen times he tested his watch, sure that it had stopped; but the next afternoon found him in sight of Chocorua's white crown; and up on the hillside, where lake and hill and sky made a world of changeless, yet ever-changing beauty, Ruth came running across the broad patio with a cry of joy at sight of him.

They went up the shallow steps together. Near the chair she had left a small white hammock held a sleeping child; and they stood looking down at him, Ruth's face radiant and tender—his very grave.

"Hasn't he grown?" she said softly.

His arm tightened round her: "Come over to the woods," he said; "I want to talk to you."

She looked up at him, a shade of apprehension in her clear, gray eyes. "Anything wrong, dear?"

"I cannot tell—yet," he answered.

"Whatever happens we have each other," she said, with quick mental reversion to business troubles that so many women make harder for the men who have to bear the brunt of them—and while she bent her cheek caressingly to the hand on her shoulder, she did not see the sudden, almost hopeless, look in the face above her.

"Look out for the baby, Janie," she said to a child, as they crossed the lawn; "take him in if it grows cold." And Janie, with a smile of importance, tiptoed to her post.

Up through the whispering pines, with the fragrant, slippery needles underfoot, to a bluff, where the world and the glory of it lay spread out before them. There was a great lichen-covered rock here, with a hollow which made an arm-chair for two, and she made room for him beside her.

"No, dear," he said; "not yet."

She looked up at him, smiling, but his face was set and stern; and her smile faded. "It is something wrong!" she cried.

He had thought of a dozen ways to tell her and each one seemed more brutal than the last; now he said, abruptly:

"There was a girl in my life I never told you of—it seemed needless—and I was glad to bury it." A swift shade of terror crossed her face. "Now, all at once—she stands between us."

She put out her hands imploringly; then with a swift catch of the breath drew them back. In an instant he was on his knees before her, holding her hands in a firm clasp:

"Ruth—how can I tell you!" he cried. "Ten years ago I married that

girl—a year later I heard of her death—two nights since I saw her—”

A great wave of relief swept over her face, and her eyes were luminous. “Dick!” she whispered; “forgive me, Dick! For one dreadful moment I wronged you!”

“Wrong!” he cried; “Ruth—Ruth—you do not see the wrong—God forgive me!—I have done to you!—You do not see what we have to face!”

“You could not wrong me,” she said simply. He sprang to his feet, striding to and fro.

“Ruth!” he cried, desperately, “don’t you see?—Good God, child!—When I married you I had no right to marry *any* one.”

Her face was white. “And the boy?”

“*You* and the boy,” he groaned.

“Ruth, *what* have I brought upon you!”

“Come here,” she said, quietly, and he came to the seat beside her. He wondered that he had never noticed before the firmness of that small hand. “Now tell me,” she said, “from the beginning. We must face this together; and I must know just where we stand.”

He looked at her in wonder mixed with adoration. “It was when I was nineteen,” he said, “and still in college; I fell in love with a pretty dancer at the ‘Gaiety,’ and thought I was the luckiest dog on earth when I took her to the Little Church Around the Corner and married her. My people were in Europe that year; and it didn’t seem just the right thing to take her into mother’s house in her absence, so I hired a little place up Riverside way, and for a month—except for a few unexpected peculiarities, which made me rather dread telling mother when she came home, I was as happy as a kid of that age is likely to be.

“Then one night I came home to find an empty house and a note. ‘The monotony was more than she could stand,’ she said, ‘and she had gone on the road again.’ What ‘road’ she didn’t say. Of course I found out and went after her. She received me with the utmost pleasantness and laughed at

my rage. ‘Now, Dicksie,’ she said—she always called me that—‘don’t make a scene!—it’s no use!—I’m tired of you, and you might just as well let me alone and go home.’ So I went—I made no attempt to see her again; but I wrote at intervals, letters to which she never replied—until one day, a year after, I read a brief paragraph, copied from a Western paper, telling of her death. I took it to father and told him the whole story. ‘You’re a luckier young fool than you deserve to be,’ he said, ‘and now bury it! I wouldn’t have your mother know this for a million!’”

He stopped and looked at her. She patted his hand softly and waited for him to go on.

“Night before last,” he said, “I went into Madison Square Garden—there’s a children’s extravaganza on there, and I had heard it was pretty good for summer nonsense. I was fascinated watching one of the children, whose face seemed curiously familiar, when, all at once, I saw *her*.”

Ruth caught her breath sharply—“Dick!” she whispered.

“Then I knew,” he went on, “why the child’s face had puzzled me; and later, in one of the pauses of the play, I saw the two together.”

He paused again; she looked at him pityingly, and passed her free hand over his hair with a lingering touch. “You spoke to her?” she asked.

“I *had* to!” he answered. “I went behind the scenes after the curtain went down, and she stood there in green tights, with golden scales and gauzy green wings—just as young and just as pretty as ten years ago—and I felt as old as Methuselah! She didn’t know me at first. I stood beside her and said: ‘Estelle.’ ‘That’s me!’ she said, laughing. I looked at her. ‘I thought you were dead,’ I said. ‘Very much alive, thank you,’ she said; then, with sudden recognition, ‘Pon my word, if it isn’t Dicksie!’ and she laughed again. ‘Why, I did that, just to stop your everlasting letters, Dicksie. I was tired of them. How are you, boy? You look as glum as you did the last time. It’s

no use, Dicksie, my dear—heap-y better laugh!’

“Are you married again?’ I asked her. ‘Not *much!*’ she said lightly, ‘Once was enough for me. Men are good enough for little suppers; but when it comes to a steady diet—excuse me!’”

Ruth’s hand suddenly tightened on his. “And the child?” she said.

He paused. “I’d better tell it to you as it came to me,” he said. “I looked at the child, talking with the other little ones in the wings, then at her. She had followed my look. ‘Oh, yes,’ she said lightly, ‘she’s yours. I gave her your name and my marriage certificate, in case I ever wanted to turn her over.’ Then she beckoned and the child ran over. ‘This gentleman wants to know your name, Chick,’ she said. ‘Dicksie Stirling, sir,’ the little one said, and offered her hand. I took the small hand in mine and looked at her. There was no doubt about it. Like as she was to her mother, ‘Dicksie Stirling’ was there—in face and bearing.

“I dropped the hand with a feeling of absolute terror. I tell you honestly, Ruth, I did not know whether I wanted to take the child in my arms or push her from me. She made a mocking little courtesy and ran back to the children.

“Are you going to turn her over?’ I said to Estelle. She laughed. ‘You never did have any sense to speak of!’ she said. ‘Why, she’s worth a thousand a year to me now; and she’ll be worth more every year.’ Then she made me a little bow. ‘Sorry I can’t continue this interesting conversation,’ she said, ‘but I have a supper engagement, and I don’t go in costume.’ And with a whirl she was gone.”

There was a long silence between them; then he spoke again: “You said, ‘Whatever happens, we have each other’—”

Ruth put both hands on his shoulders. “And we *have!*” she said.

“But we cannot!” he groaned. “There are laws and conventions. There are legal formalities—and God knows what else—and there is the child!”

“And there are the *children,*” Ruth said softly.

Of course the papers got wind of it, and the ubiquitous reporter manufactured information not otherwise obtainable to meet the demand for headlines. To do Estelle justice, she did not add to the sensation. When she found that there was another Mrs. Stirling she wrote: “Do what you like, Dicksie. I don’t care. I’ve never been billed under that name.” She was perfectly willing to be freed legally, and Richard Stirling’s other marriage was apparently a matter of entire indifference to her; but when it came to the question of Dicksie, she fought—and Dick wrote to Ruth:

“She is my child. I have seen her several times and I *know* it; but I see no way to save her. If we had the ground that her mother either neglected or led her astray, but that is untenable. And after all, have I the right? She may love the child. But Richard Stirling’s daughter—”

Ruth did not answer this and Dick was unreasonably hurt. He knew he was unreasonable, but the strain was telling on him and the letters from the hill-country made the only companionship in his silent rooms. So he moped over his library fire; and meanwhile, in a small downtown hotel, two women stood facing each other.

“I really don’t know why you should want to see me,” Estelle was saying, “but since you do—sit down—I wasn’t in the least curious about you.” And she laughed.

“I came,” said Ruth quietly, “because sometimes two women can understand each other better than men can understand them.”

Estelle laughed again. “I’m not yearning for an affinity,” she said. “Haven’t I given you all you wanted?”

“You gave up all you *didn’t* want,” Ruth said.

“You’re keen!” said Estelle. “No, I didn’t want *him.*”

“But there is one thing you both want,” said Ruth.

Estelle was on the defensive imme-

diately. "You mean Dicksie," she said. "Well, he can't have her! She's worth more than anything he can offer."

"I know that," said Ruth softly. "The question is: Isn't she worth *too much* for you to keep?"

Estelle stared at her. "That's a new view of the subject," she said; but she did not laugh.

"We who are mothers *must* look ahead," said Ruth. "What would Dicksie do if you were to die in reality, instead of in print?"

Estelle laughed slightly. "That's putting it in plain English," she said. "Why, she would go to her father. Nobody can say I haven't taken good care of her!" she added resentfully.

"If you *hadn't* taken good care of her," Ruth said, "I shouldn't have thought it worth while to come. I knew there was something to count on."

"You didn't know me, then," said Estelle, laughing again; "I'm not accountable to anyone."

"Except to Dicksie," said Ruth.

Estelle leaned forward suddenly, confronting her fiercely; the reckless gaiety of her manner quite gone. "Do you suppose," she hissed, "I would send her into a home where she would be taught to despise me, while I am alive to know it? Dick Stirling gets his daughter after I die—not before!"

"I knew it!" cried Ruth; "I knew it! Oh, my dear, give her to me to hold in trust for you!"

Estelle looked at her, bewildered.

Ruth's voice was full of tears. "Those blind lawyers!" she cried; "they said: 'She cannot see anything but the money the child earns for her.' I *knew*!"

Estelle leaned toward her, speaking slowly and hesitatingly. "You mean—that if I give you Dicksie—she will be allowed to know me still—and see me—"

Ruth came over to her, kneeling beside her and taking her unresisting hands. "Could I give my baby into the care of anyone who would take him utterly from me?" she said. "Could

I ask another woman to do what I could not?"

Estelle looked at her searchingly. "You *mean* it!" she said. "You really *mean* it! But can you stand surety for him?"

"I give you my word," said Ruth, earnestly, "that if he refuses to ratify my promise to you, I will refuse to marry him again."

Estelle still looked searchingly at her. "You have one child—you may have more—"

"Dicksie is Richard Stirling's elder child," she said quietly.

Estelle rose suddenly to her feet, pacing the room with swift, lithe tread. Ruth sat watching her with eyes full of tenderness. Suddenly she stopped before her.

"She knows him—a little—" she said; "*she* shall decide. She may choose between us."

"If she is her father's daughter," Ruth said, "she will be loyal to you."

Estelle turned sharply and continued her walk. Again she stopped before Ruth. "*Why* did you come here?" she cried stormily. "Why couldn't you let me alone! You are robbing me of the only thing I have in life!"

"Did you ever think you might be robbing *her*—of her birthright?" Ruth's voice was low and clear, but she felt like an executioner.

Estelle sank into a chair; her face was white. Ruth waited. By and by she laughed—a queer little laugh.

"I didn't know I was billed for the villain of the piece," she said, "and I hadn't rehearsed. I don't think I'm built for tragedy—or theft," she added. "Tisn't a pretty word, is it?"

Dicksie, curled up on the arm of her father's chair, nestled cosily against his shoulder, looking dreamily into the fire. She was in the mood for confidences.

"One's mother always comes first," she said; "but after her—and you—there isn't anybody in the *whole world*—and never was—and never will be—quite so dear as my Lady Ruth!"

THE HEREDITARY WAY

By Harriet Gaylord

JOHN WELDON paused after dictating his notes for the next morning's correspondence to his secretary. She waited expectantly. The rays of the sun setting behind the North River shone into the suite of offices whose luxurious newness suggested infallibly the would-be sybarite suddenly set loose from a life of toil and aiming to establish his position in an exclusive social world to which his riches gave him the open sesame. Nothing was blatant; a connoisseur would instinctively have felt also that nothing reflected the artistic discrimination of the man at the desk, but rather that a generous *carte blanche* had been given before his arrival on the scene to the best decorators money could command. Yet Weldon had fitted himself into his surroundings with surprising ease, and his rugged, massive vigor of frame, his handsome, though somewhat stolid cast of countenance, indicated the man of affairs entering cautiously but surely into his kingdom.

The girl at his side gave a harmonious feminine touch to the picture. Delicate in face and figure, an unusual nervous vitality and charm of coloring would have caused one to place her instinctively and erroneously upon a higher social plane than the man. Her dark eyes were raised questioningly to his as he gazed at her reflectively, noting the hollows under her eyes, the feverish flush of her cheeks, the blue veining in the hand which held the pencil poised to do his bidding.

"Is that all, Mr. Weldon?" she asked finally, her face flaming under his concentrated regard.

"All the notes, yes; but I want to

talk to you. Why are you looking so under the weather?"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" she cried. "Do I show it like that? I—I think I'm not quite myself this winter. That slight attack of grippe—"

"When you insisted on coming to your duties each day in spite of the doctor's orders, and kept me ignorant of the state of affairs through your splendid nerve—" broke in Weldon.

"Oh, but that was nothing! And just then you needed me."

"I admit that. Your services are at all times invaluable. Nevertheless I am going to send you packing!"

"You mean—?" The color left her face and she poised her head proudly.

"I mean simply that I am going to send you for a holiday and deprive myself of your assistance until you return perfectly fit. You don't object to having a rest, I hope."

Ruth Lyon laughed in the gladness of relief.

"I think it will be heavenly!" she cried.

"Ah! you're as tired as that, are you?" The curious concentration in his gaze intensified.

"I'm afraid I am. I'm sorry!"

"Have I worked you too hard?"

"Never! You don't know what a sinecure this position is! Why, last summer I worked through all the stifling heat in a dark, gas-lighted office of a third-rate publishing house for half my present salary!"

"Do you mean you had no holiday?"

"None at all."

"Why not?"

"Just the bread and butter problem."

"What were your parents thinking of?"

"I haven't any—I'm an orphan."

"You—you seem very superior to even the class of work you are doing now."

"Oh, but I'm not! My father was a clerk in a little country store. My mother, a village seamstress. They died when I was a child. I educated myself by working in all sorts of ways at school and college."

"You've been through college!" Weldon's tone vibrated with masculine dread of the educated woman.

"Oh, but that means so little nowadays!" she cried deprecatingly. "Besides, you never suspected it."

"No. That's true. I will admit that it hasn't spoiled you." He spoke grudgingly, and there was another pause. At last his own face flushed a deep red.

"Miss Lyon," he said, "I am going to take you somewhat further into my confidence than I have done heretofore. First let me ask you if there is any place where you especially wish to go for your holiday?"

"No," she answered. "As I said before, I have no ties. I feel only that I'd like to get into the country where I'll never have to hear an alarm clock or dodge a trolley car or an automobile—where there are breathing spaces and hours when one needn't hear a sound."

Weldon nodded approvingly.

"Very good! And you don't mind the cold?"

"I love it! One can breathe!"

Weldon sat fingering a paper-weight. Then he opened a drawer at the side of his desk and took out a letter which he held in his hand. Ruth Lyon watched him, wonder and something akin to content and rest in her eyes.

"Yes," he said finally, "I am going to take you into my confidence because I want you to combine a great service to me with your own recuperation. First, let me ask you, as an educated woman and a woman of penetration, if you feel that I—er—belong to—" he hesitated, then by a gesture indicated his surroundings—"this sort of thing?"

She hesitated in her turn.

"I wish the truth," he urged.

She laughed as she answered:

"Who am I that I should judge? But I have fancied—"

"That I am aggressively new?"

"In just the atmosphere you are striving to create—yes."

"Dead right! Can you tell me how you know? Where I fail?"

"No," she said reflectively, "I can't."

"Is it my speech?"

"Oh, no!—unless," she added as an after-thought, "you are—well, a little too careful and educated."

He thought for a moment.

"Probably you are right. I have made myself read a great deal, and there was a younger son of an English lord out in the mines. I paid him five dollars an hour to teach me to talk like a gentleman. I suppose he overearned his salary. Very well, then, Miss Lyon, let us get down to facts. I am going to tell you in absolute confidence what I believe only two other people in the world know—and that because I was not able to maintain my exalted state"—he smiled ironically—"without some twinges of conscience and sentiment. Conscience is a disturbing member, Miss Lyon. Perhaps sentiment is even more dangerous."

She smiled sympathetically, and something in her eyes held him. For a moment his own were troubled. Then he handed her the letter, saying:

"Read that!"

She obeyed. The paper was cheap, the penmanship crude, the composition illiterate.

DEAR SON:

Yrs read and contents noted. We are doing very well except your mother is ailing I know it is because she wants to see you. She hasnt been herself since youre first letter come. I cant seem to make her happy till she sees you. I hope you will come. Dont let her know I wrote you. We keep youre secret and know it is best for you she reads about you in the papers. We will never trouble you but I hope you will come.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES ROBERTS.

As Ruth Lyon laid the letter on the desk, Weldon said:

"I have not seen them since I was a boy. I went West and they have thought I was dead. Last winter my conscience began to trouble me and I wrote to them."

"I am sure they must have been very glad."

"They were, I think. And now, Miss Lyon, I tell you this because I want to make you my proxy. I know they live comfortably, and my mother was a lady. I want you to go in my stead, tell them about me, get your rest, and later, when this big deal is consummated, I shall run up for a Sunday. I can't go now. I—to tell you the truth I shrink from the ordeal—and you women have so much tact—I want you to smooth the way so it won't be awkward and I shall not have to talk a lot about myself." He laughed. "I put it clumsily, I know, but tell me—your woman's wit has traveled faster than my halting speech!"

Her eyes had grown very bright, and when he paused she laughed softly.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"May I speak as if I weren't your secretary?" she queried—"as if we were—just friends?"

"Am I not making you my best friend?"

"That is very lovely of you! Then let me say I think you are like nothing so much as a big boy who has been naughty and who begs sister to intercede for him before he dares to face the stern parents!"

Weldon laughed.

"That's about the size of it! I see you understand. But there is much more I must tell you. I want you to go day after tomorrow. You are sure you won't mind?"

"Mind! I think it is beautiful of you! I shall wonder if it isn't all done for my sake."

"Oh, I assure you, no! I felt guilty because I didn't want to go myself, and so cast around for a proxy. Who but you could be trusted?"

"And your mother? Will she be glad to see me?"

"Don't you understand? I shall be giving her something to do for me, and

she will have the chance to tell you all about my infancy! I am throwing myself entirely on your mercy, Miss Lyon!"

"Tell me more of your reasons. Tell me about—them!"

"I'll try to be brief," he answered, "but I could make it a very long story. As I said, my mother was a lady, and as you have seen, my father is not a gentleman. She was"—he hesitated—"probably you are too young for her name to mean anything to you, but at least you know that of the family. She was Anita Vanderkuypen."

"No," said Ruth. "No, I am sure I know nothing of her history."

"There was a great scandal," continued Weldon bitterly, "but all I need to tell you is that she ran away with her coachman. I—I look like him."

"You do not look like a coachman," interposed Ruth softly. "You look like a gentleman."

"Thank you! When I came into life it was on the small stock farm where they live yet—just outside Saratoga. My coachman father still makes a living largely by the races—quite honestly, you know. He is stolid, unimaginative, and wholly unambitious. My mother was more delicate and fragile than you, but she hadn't your balance, needless to say, and alas! she was a creature of sentiment and inclination. The two natures warred in me as a boy, but sentiment I have crushed out of my life and the pride I inherited from her came to the fore as ambition. Add that to my father's dogged persistency—stolidity, if you will—and I suppose you have my character in a nutshell."

"But why did you hide from them all these years?"

"Because I wanted to cut loose from the shame as soon as I understood. I took a new name, had it legalized, and began afresh."

"You have accomplished wonders!"

"Considering the start I had in life, I think I have."

"You bear the marks of the struggle." She gazed reflectively at the lines on his face, the scar on his cheek.

"Yes. It was a wild, bad life. Some

day I will tell you a few of my experiences if you care to listen. For years I was practically penniless, living from hand to mouth. At last I borrowed a few dollars to open up my first claim. Then I lived alone for months in a shanty, miles from anywhere, tunneling out the mine with my own unaided hands. I fought against wild beasts, mountain fever, starvation, everything. Do you wonder I love success?"

"No," said Ruth, rising, "no, and I think you are a brave man."

"Now I have told you, you do not mind going to my mother? She is respected in the community, you understand. The past is forgotten. And her husband has always been a good husband to her. I doubt if she has ever regretted her choice. Strange! she might have had the world at her feet!"

"I think you are most thoughtful to send me and I thank you for your confidence."

Weldon rose, a trifle unsteadily, then moved abruptly and switched on the lights.

"It has been good to talk to you," he said. "You are an unusual woman, Miss Lyon, a very unusual woman. I shall be fortunate if you will be my friend."

He held her eyes against his own will till the air between them was charged with significance. Then he turned to close his desk.

"I hope you won't stay longer. Can't I give you a lift? My motor is waiting outside."

"Oh, thank you, no," she answered. "I must straighten out these notes before I leave."

He paused for a moment as if about to add something, then abruptly held out his hand and said, "Good-night."

Ruth Lyon did not at once resume her work when she was seated at her desk in the next room. Instead she sat thinking, a happy light in her eyes. At last, with her soft laugh, she started to reduce the chaos of her notes to order. Weldon had forgotten to give her some requisite memoranda and she returned to his private office, using her

duplicate key for his desk. Opening the drawer where she knew the paper was placed, she ran hastily through the sheets lying there. Suddenly she stopped in amazement. The paper in her hand was new to her and must have been slipped among the business memoranda by mistake. She examined it curiously. It was a list of unmarried society belles with their claims to social and family distinction. At the top of the list was the name of Beatrice Hombeck, daughter of Mrs. de Bouvier Hombeck, with her enviable lineage and family prestige most painstakingly elucidated.

Beatrice Hombeck! From her perch in the family circle of the Metropolitan Opera House, Ruth Lyon had often seen that glacial, bovine, blond beauty, and she laughed merrily, mischievously, as she realized the import of finding this paper in John Weldon's desk. Then quite suddenly she sobered and stood wrinkling her pretty brow in perplexity until a softness dawned in her eyes. Stooping gently, she kissed the back of the chair where he had been sitting.

"You dear, blissful stupid!" she whispered, "you must not make that mistake!"

Two evenings later in the modest home of Mr. and Mrs. James Roberts, Ruth began to understand better the character of John Weldon. The handsome old man's manipulation of the English language was bad, his manner often embarrassed. He bore all the hall-marks of early poverty and a stolid, ambitionless acceptance of his lot. But the beautiful expression on his face when he spoke to his wife, his thoughtfulness and devotion to the slightest indication of her will, caused Ruth to catch her breath in a sort of choked wonder. For the ex-coachman, at least, love for his stooping goddess had survived. It had never caused him to work wonders, or to fight to build a bridge across the social chasm between them, but it had lived and thrived and protected and worshiped for nearly forty years—and what more could one ask even of love? Ruth turned to the

woman to find in what way she had kept the devotion of the man for whom she had lost her world and her birth-right.

Mrs. Roberts was delicate, with a faded silvery loveliness. Her face must always have been weak and her character superficial. It was unquestionably the delicacy, the femininity, the need of protection, which at first had appealed to the strong animal virility of her lover, and which through all these years had held her husband enthralled. She was at times a trifle peevish and querulous, perhaps; somewhat spoiled by her husband's devotion, and a little given to harping on what she had lost, but the man in his humility accepted that as his just due and only tried the harder to make her happy.

And from the union of these two had sprung John Weldon. He had said that their natures warred within him as a youth, but, except for his pride and ambition and desire to recover the place in the social world which his mother had flouted, Ruth realized that a casual observer would have found little of her in his composition. She, however, was no casual observer, but a woman whose every intuition was sharpened to analyze and understand the man she was beginning to love. Unwittingly, by sending her where she could study the lineage which lay behind his dominant personality, he was arming her with weapons to shatter his cherished ideals.

Ruth told Mrs. Roberts all she knew of Weldon, and Mrs. Roberts petted and coddled her as a veritable proxy for the son whom she was longing to see. When the girl at last said goodbye, she carried away with her, not only the love of the two old people and a renewed vitality, but an overwhelming conviction of the values of life—the little span between two eternities. These people, apparently so ill-assorted, by following their intuitions had splendidly solved their destiny, because, however great the social chasm between them, the plane and trend of their intellects were harmonious. Therefore love had survived the first strong physical attraction, and perhaps their find-

ing each other meant for the scheme of existence two less in the number of unhappy homes.

And their son? Yes, she understood him now with an understanding born of intuition and nourished by knowledge.

When he found her at her desk that morning, John Weldon greeted her heartily, with almost a boyish touch of wistfulness.

"Come and tell me all about them!" he said.

And so, before he opened his morning's mail, he listened to her recital, asking questions here and there, beaming with satisfaction as she finished. He reached out his hand and grasped hers.

"Thank you more than I can say!" he said. "I hope you haven't colored matters for my sake."

"No, indeed!" she cried. "I loved them for themselves and you will find great happiness in adding to that which they intrinsically possess."

"It certainly is gratifying to find you looking so fit. That in itself repays me for depriving myself of your services so long."

Ruth began her work conscious of some indefinable change in Weldon. The impression strengthened during the day. Many times she caught his eyes fixed on her only to be shifted instantly. This was very unlike the dominating gaze before which she had so often found herself confused. The explanation came that afternoon when she was making preparations to leave.

"Miss Lyon, can you come here for a few moments?" he called.

When she was seated at his desk he hesitated awkwardly, and his likeness to his father grew very apparent. A sudden intuition told Ruth what he was about to say, and her heart grew chill. Then she gallantly braced herself for battle royal.

"Miss Lyon," said Weldon at last, "I feel bound to tell you that in the future there will be even more reason than now to make you my proxy to cheer my parents occasionally if you will be so good. It will never be in my power to do much for them except in a material way, and you have as-

sured me that is unnecessary—almost adding insult to injury. Unfortunately there is now more need of secrecy in regard to my origin than ever. I am going to be married, Miss Lyon. The announcement will shortly appear in the papers."

"Yes?" Ruth's voice was soft and gentle, but she felt her face go white. Weldon winced as he gazed, then turned his eyes to his desk.

"Yes," he continued, "to Miss Beatrice Hombeck."

"And—and you want me to wish you happiness?"

"Of course"—but he did not meet her eyes.

"You—you think it will be a happy marriage?"

"I hope so."

"I have just come from a home where I occasionally caught my breath in awe and wonder. The light in your father's eyes as he looks at your mother is the most beautiful thing I ever saw. He was a coachman and she a lady, but they loved each other and the chasm between them was bridged."

"There is a chasm between Miss Hombeck and me."

"I have seen Miss Hombeck. I should say that in intellect she would rank below what your father ever was. You inherit what was best in your mother's ancestry. Yes, there is a chasm."

Weldon laughed and looked at her curiously.

"You know very well I didn't mean that, and I fancy Mrs. de Bouvier Hombeck will hardly regard my alliance with her daughter in that light. Why, Miss Lyon, I am practically an unknown. I'm brutally rich, of course, but think what her family stands for!"

"And you would marry for just that?"

He was silent for a moment, then answered:

"You put it with distasteful bluntness, but let us be frank. Yes, I am going to marry for just that."

"I am sorry!" There was gentle pity in her eyes. "I am extremely sorry."

"Why?"

"Because you have so far hewn out your life magnificently. I think you are the most wonderful man I ever knew. And now you"—there was almost a sob in her voice, but her eyes smiled bravely—"won't hitch your wagon to a star, but to a woman's dead and gone ancestors! Oh, it isn't American! It isn't John Weldon!"

In spite of himself, at the girl's outburst, self-revelation sprang to his eyes and his lips spoke what his brain forbade.

"Oh, my dear little girl!" he said. "My dear little girl!"

Then, aghast, he drew back, his mouth sternly set.

"That was your mother!" cried Ruth. "Your impulsive mother spoke then! Why, why do you fight down all that she gave you as a heritage? Oh, I'm so glad you said—just that!"

He sprang to his feet and began pacing up and down the room.

"But I'm not!" he cried. "Why, I was a scoundrel to speak those words. I don't deny for a moment that you have made yourself invaluable in my life, and praise from your lips was so sweet I forgot, that's all. I meant you should never know."

"Tell me," she cried imperiously, "why praise from my lips is sweet!" He stopped abruptly.

"Those words I will not say!"

"Oh," she cried, "I don't mean what you think I mean! Put it on cold intellectual grounds. Then tell me why you liked my words!"

He thought, then answered:

"Cold, intellectual analysis is out of the question. But I see what you mean. You understand me and always have. Many times I have not needed to speak, for you interpreted my thought even as it came. It has been very helpful, very restful. And for you to believe in me in spite of the evidence I have given you of my unworthiness, for you to dare to do battle with me against myself, put me off my guard. Miss Lyon, I apologize. Forget those words! Let us go back to where we were before they were spoken!"

"Ah, we can't do that! Yes, you are right. And it is not only I who understand you, but we who understand each other. It is just that very thing which has made your mother's *mésalliance* forgivable, admirable. In spite of her birth, her mind was on James Roberts's plane, and she recognized that dimly and made the plunge."

"Your mind is quicker, superior to mine."

"No, we are merely keyed to the same note. Oh!" and she rose with a pretty gesture of dismay, "where are we? Don't think me unwomanly that I have brought you here! It all swept over me so suddenly—your mistake. It seemed as if I couldn't let you make it. But alas! I can't speak disinterestedly! Would that I could, for then I should convince you!"

"Sit down again, please! You could never be unwomanly. You charmed me first through your femininity. You are the sort of woman a man wants to breast the storms of life for—but I have chosen otherwise. Now let us talk sensibly. I can't see my father and mother as you do. It seems to me her weak sentimentality made a mess of her life. I can't forget my boyish shame when I was first told the story, and I vowed then I would win my way back and stand among the highest of the land that my children should know only pride in their ancestry. I have done a great deal for myself, but the time has come when I must have help—the help an alliance with Miss Hombeck will give."

"You—you can love her as the mother of your children ought to be loved?"

"I hope I shall."

"A woman sometimes learns to love a man whom she has married without love. I believe an unloved wife remains such to the end. And—have you thought what your daily life would be?"

"I think most of my thought has been directed to attaining what I have now attained."

"Oh!" she cried, "isn't that just like a man? They choose their wives as they choose their furniture—and change

them, in the society you would frequent almost as easily! But it's wicked, wicked! I know I am talking as no woman in my circumstances should talk. When I get away from you and realize what I have said, I shall be overwhelmed with shame. Here I am, poor—as low-born perhaps as your father—just your hireling—and apparently I'm throwing myself at your head!" She caught her breath in a sob. "But you're too big not to understand! You know—"

"I know that I love you as I should love the woman I want to make my wife," he interrupted quickly. "I may as well say it. You have known it a long time or you would never speak as you do."

"Oh, thank you! Yes, I know you understand, and you didn't need to say those words, but I thank you just the same. And I know you will believe me when I say I'm fighting more for your happiness than I am for my own. Can't you see what it would mean to me in future years if I knew you were wretched—as you would be in marrying a woman whom you don't love—if I knew it and knew I had kept silence from false shame? It isn't that I want to marry you—I want you happy! happy! If you grew to love another woman more than me, why I'd gladly annihilate myself for your sake—but I can't see you make this mistake without uttering a word of protest! Oh, yes, believe me, I'm fighting for your life and happiness more than for my own. I see, and you are blind."

She ceased and watched him as he strode up and down the room for a long time, gazing at her face each time he passed. The fight was on! Dusk crept in and overshadowed them, and, as if he feared the darkness, he switched on the lights. Finally he paused before her.

"You are a brave, womanly little girl," he said, "and I'm afraid of you! Yes, I really am! I mapped out the course before me years ago; I swore to myself a solemn oath that when I came to marry it should be a marriage of pure reason. I want my children to

enjoy what my mother forfeited for herself and me. After all, that is what counts in this practical, work-a-day world."

Her voice was very gentle, very winning.

"Is it? I think I have learned that there is something better—a richer heritage which one can hand down to one's children—something for which the world might well be lost. But it is either the stupid souls who blunder on it, or the great souls who dare to choose it. The mediocre and the calculating never find the path."

Again he paced up and down the room, then said:

"To follow one's inclinations is weak. That was what my mother did—what you would have me do. I'd rather stake my chances—at least I think I would—on cold reason. I don't like to feel my backbone melting to a jelly!" He smiled at her whimsically, and the blood flooded her sensitive face as hope of victory warmed at her heart. Smiling back, she said:

"Does it seem to you that I am as unadaptable as—dear James Roberts? That the gulf between us is impassable? That there would be no cold reason in keeping by your side, even if you do happen to love her and want to keep her there, the woman who understands your every mood, who reads your thought before it comes? Oh, it's a shameful thing you are making me do, isn't it? I feel so horribly like a new woman or a suffragette; but you have said you love me, you know, and I seem to be the only one present who understands that one's parents don't matter, or all the dead and gone ancestors, except for what they have put into us, and they seem to have given us both—just love! I think there is reason in choosing—just love!"

"There's no question of your suitability for any station, however high. Pray don't for a moment think I question that. In every way you would do me the greatest honor by accepting my hand. I am influenced simply by the one question of giving my children that

heritage which has always seemed to me most desirable and which neither you nor I possess."

"I should have thought your hard life would have taught you values."

"It has taught me how easily the majority of people follow their inclinations, and has made me distrustful of my own. I've been fighting this battle against the inclination to love you for all the months we have known each other. One reason for sending you away was that I might not be deflected from my purpose until the future was assured. Until I saw you again I felt perfectly sure of the wisdom of my course. Now here you are, looking like an inspired angel, assuring me that because I wish to pick you up in my arms and clear a passage for you through life, that is the very thing I ought to do. Get thee behind me, Miss Inspired Angel!" He smiled down at her as he stood with arms clasped behind his back to keep them out of danger.

"I'm afraid you're beginning to be convinced!" was her laughing accusation.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Thanks to our mutual sense of humor, we can stand in the midst of things and smile. They are rather weighty questions we discuss, none the less. I admit I feel horribly as if I were beginning to be convinced, and a future with you certainly offers more irresistible attractions than one with Miss Hombeck. However, I refuse to pronounce an ultimatum tonight. There is Miss Hombeck to be considered, you see."

"Yes. I am very sorry about that."

"Oh! I have a shrewd suspicion that she has an inclination elsewhere herself—where there is caste to burn and no money to light the fire. A little time—a little time, and—"

He paused and his eyes tugged at the surrender in her heart.

"Yes," she said dizzily, "a little time—?"

"And perhaps we may all choose the old hereditary way."

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WHERE EXILED RUSSIA EATS

"THE CAFÉS, THOSE UNIVERSITIES OF THE EAST SIDE"

By Mabel Agnes Lorenz

THE Jew is the most incurably intellectual of all mankind. He may be starved in body and mind, but hunger cannot kill the racial appetite for learning, and prosperity seldom comes to satiate it. The body he keeps under and allows his mind to range all paths of knowledge, the free and the forbidden. Without a foot of land to call his own, he claims as his inheritance the broad fields of the soul, and year by year he adds to his domain. Art was once sealed from him through a misreading of the Decalogue, and tradition long forbade to him the stage, but he has snapped the willow withes that bound him and now feels himself the conscious master of his powers.

Religion, politics and reform he discusses in his cafés, literature and morals, music and sometimes science, history in the making and secret history inaccessible to those who write merely from documents and records, but powerful to make or mar realms larger than the Balkan States. He speaks with authority on all these matters and often has ground for positiveness, for usually he has had a hand in the very movement of which he speaks.

It is in the clean little tea-rooms along Canal street or in the larger but just as clean cafés on Grand street that these discussions take place. Equally welcome is the guest who orders a course dinner and he who contents himself with Russian tea. Everyone of note in the New York Ghetto can be seen here sooner or later. One has only to sit still and the stream goes by, for these tea-rooms on the East Side are

as much clubs as were the parlors of the Boar's Head and the Belle Sauvage in Marlowe's and Shakespeare's day, the chocolate and coffee houses that Addison and Swift delighted to honor, or the Cheshire Cheese where Dr. Johnson laid down the law.

"Is there a question that has troubled the ages?" asks Bernard Richards. "Come and spend fifteen minutes on the East Side, and the salvation of humanity will be assured to you. There is so much squalor and suffering and sorrow here that nothing can overcome the optimism of these chosen people. Their incurable faith cannot be shaken even by their religious leaders, and when they become atheists they are the most pious atheists in all the world."

Turning from the Bowery into Grand street, you buy a paper printed in Hebrew type from the bent old woman crouched at the foot of the Elevated staircase, and make your way slowly along the broad sidewalk, dodging the youngsters who break into sudden games before your feet and stepping aside from the men who keep straight on, oblivious of you as a possible obstruction in their undeviating path of progress. Usually they go by twos, talking, always talking; it may be of the new play at Jacob Adler's theatre, of the latest outbreak in Russia, or of the telegraph strike the Union hopes to win. At all events they are earnest and intent, so rapt in their discussion that, in spite of your objection to stepping out under the misty drops from the Elevated tracks, your annoyance passes away and you cannot help com-

paring yourself to Tennyson's fly upon the window-pane.

Near the Forsyth street corner you enter a café with stiff, slender bushes growing in a box before the door, and find yourself in a long room whose color scheme is red—the Russian's favorite color. The walls are red with a frieze of red and gold and an oval of electric globes in the ceiling, shaded by golden water-lilies, while each table has its electric lamp, red-shaded and fringed with garnet beads. Halfway back an archway of open woodwork partly breaks the length of the room, and you seat yourself at a small table nearby, a position of vantage for observing your fellow-guests and for listening to the music furnished by piano, violin and double bass. A broad stairway leads to a large room above, decorated in green and used at holiday seasons, either Jewish or Christian, since the Russian in America observes his own holidays from choice and those of his new country perforce, most enjoying these days when business must be suspended if they are made memorable by some deep discussion.

On all sides English is spoken, without much accent. The patrons are Russians and Austrians who have been in this country as long as fifteen years. "All thoroughly Americanized," you are told. You note the trim suits of the women, the russet shoes of the men, the general air of confidence and well-being that pervades the place, and, faintly realizing the change these fifteen years have brought, you can assent to their compatriot's assertion that they are Americanized. The conformity that Russia demanded, but could not obtain, has come about spontaneously in the New World. Lithuania, Russian Poland, Galicia and Little Russia once held these people midway between serfs and citizens, but it remained for the land of their exile to give them untrammelled manhood. The furtive look is gone; one can forgive the occasional swagger. About one table is gathered a truly Old World family party, albeit New World in dress and speech. Aged grandparents are there, a youth and

maiden, as well as the married son with his wife and two small children too young to sit at the table and eat their elders' fare, with now and then a sip from father's glass of tea or uncle's frothing beer.

Lorber himself passes through the room, stopping to greet a party of friends. He is a native of Galicia, who, a few years ago, was merely waiter in an East Side restaurant, but he saved money and now has this café of his own, which he looks to minutely. Everything is clean and appetizing.

The waiter dusts the table with a napkin while you study the bill of fare: table d'hôte dinner, forty cents; with poultry, forty-five cents. For soup you choose "cold sour," recommended as the most typically Russian dish on the menu. It well deserves its name—a rather clear, white soup served in a bowl, full of parsley sprigs, in the midst of which floats a pear-shaped solid that long defies the sharp edge of the spoon and later proves to be potato. You need not be to the manner born in order to relish "cold sour" to begin your meal, but it is oftener an inherited than an acquired taste that leads to ordering it night after night and leaving no trace of potato in the depths of one's bowl. Stewed apricots arrive with the soup, but being in doubt when to eat them you leave the fruit untasted till the meat course, for which it is foresightedly intended. For entrée you hesitate between baked porgies, which you know, and kalbs gulasch, quite unknown to you, which is really veal stew masquerading under a German-Magyar name, gulasch being a thick Hungarian stew. Roast goose flanked by radishes and pickles—the pickles are inevitable—baked beans and potatoes, salad and dessert succeed each other, with tea at the end—iced in deference to an Americanized palate.

But if you would drink Russian tea in a real Russian atmosphere, go back to Grand street; and if you can read the Russian lettering on the sign, seek out the Moskovski Traktir. Perhaps in the neighborhood of Grand and Allen streets it is more often spoken of sim-

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ply as the *Russkaya Gastinitza*, which, being interpreted, means the Russian Inn—*gast* being akin to the English word guest. This is the newest of the restaurants, and has attracted many guests from the others. There is a red-walled corridor broken into several short flights of uneven steps, a bewildering turn or two, and you find yourself at the palm-guarded entrance of a large restaurant on the second floor. Across the mirror-paneled walls are strung grapevines in autumn tints and from pillar to pillar are festooned long vines hung also with grapes.

Your table overlooks the street with the whole window-sash turned on a pivot to admit the breeze. Glancing out, you note the pushcarts drawn up to the curb in solid ranks, with everything for sale from Tokay grapes by the half-pound to gold shirt-studs at two for five and gold-filled brooches for a quarter. Glancing within, you see the head waiter stalking about among the tables, tall and black and melancholy, like a larger reproduction of the younger photographs of the poet, Morris Rosenfeld. The patrons are principally men who have not been over very long and who do not lay claim to being Americanized. Everyone you see is essentially Russian. Only later in the evening does a party of Teutons enter, with the build and complexion of Swedes and the grace of the fair-haired Lombards. In the room where you sit there is a large proportion of business and professional men, for this is the Russian *café de commerce*.

At a table in one corner sits a stout man of forty-five with a young face and a mass of waving, light hair, who from time to time adds his voice to the music of the orchestra. This is Platon Brounoff, the pianist and composer, a graduate of the Imperial Conservatory at St. Petersburg under Rubinstein and Rimsky-Korsakoff. He is the only representative in America of the modern Russian school of composition, and is the composer of "The Russian Village" and of the Russian *Marseillaise*. Just before he came to the United States his great overture, "Russia,"

was performed before the Czar by an orchestra which Rubinstein conducted.

Across the table from Brounoff sits a tall young man with longish, dark hair and white scarf, a pupil of his who sings there in the evenings. The orchestra, made up of girls and men, finishes playing and Brounoff's pupil strolls across the room to sing an Italian song, which is received with applause. Then the orchestra plays a favorite Russian melody, a strange minor strain with all the monotony of the Steppes in its rhythm, varied by bursts of wild hilarity, which show the Russian to be a man of moods, but ever returning to the solemn monotony of the opening measures, and finally dying away into mere accent that leaves you wondering whether it is the music or your own pulse-beats that you still hear. It is a song called "To Be Born," which, like Shakespeare's seven ages of man, describes human life from the cradle to the grave. Dear to the heart of many a Russian there, it seems, for with the music the words spring unconsciously to the lips and when the last notes had died out of one's consciousness there is such hearty enthusiasm that the minor passage is repeated in all its mournful beauty.

As you take your leave you pause to see the room adjoining, a somewhat longer one, for men alone, where prices are cheaper and where many keep on their hats—derbies in August weather. The waiters are dressed in Russian blouses of red polka-dotted calico, one of them with his auburn hair looking far more like a lad from Erin than like a stepson of the Czar's domain. Some of the men wear coats, some are in their shirt-sleeves, and a dense cloud of smoke hangs over all, as they lounge at their little tables with squat white tea-pots before them decorated with large initials in black.

More and more guests arrive the later it grows, for the Russian is apt to have a long working day and his evening only begins at nine o'clock. Sleep he must have, but not while he finds a more interesting way to spend his time. So he orders anything, from one glass of

beer that lasts him half the evening to a course dinner that begins with "cold sour" and ends with delicious Russian tea. He eats, talks, listens to music and is happy, though always with the pang of exile latent in his soul.

But Russians do not keep entirely to themselves. They eat elsewhere than at their own cafés. As you finish your evening meal in a restaurant near Union Square, your table is invaded by a party of four girls in big black hats who address your waitress familiarly by her first name.

"I sure never can stay on to your right name, Kinky," says the girl with the heart-shaped pendant of rhinestones. "I hear that so much that the other don't stick. It's a good name for you, too."

"Yes," answers Kinky contentedly, "it saves curling. All the boys in the place just know me as Kinky. It's always 'Kink-this' and 'Kink-that,' and never no more. I think it's best that way, too, just to let them call you by your work name. Then you don't get spoke about outside."

"What's Carrie Nation's name, now she's left the restaurant?" asks a third. "Dirty Face never could stand her."

"No, but I always took to Carrie," remarks the girl with the gleaming pendant. "She talked sort of Irish, but she had a good heart, Carrie Nation had. I always took to Carrie, somehow."

"So did I," assents Kinky from her plate of ice cream. "She was a nice girl. Married now. Lives in Newark."

"You'd think Fancy would have married first; she knows how to talk to men," says Goldie, half in envy and half in admiration. "I never see such a girl to keep so many tables going, with a word here and word over there: 'I hope your meat's done right,' and 'Is your coffee strong enough today?' She sure rakes off the tips, Fancy does."

"She earns it right enough, that's what I tell them," says Kinky.

"They say she's got a Christian fellow," puts in the fourth girl with a shade of disapprobation. "They say she helps him; that's why she wants the cash."

"I don't believe it," says Kink decidedly. "He helps her or she wouldn't have so much money to invest. Town lots. Suburban homes. You know."

"That's right," assents the girl with the glittering heart. "The kind where every mantelpiece costs you ten thousand. A real swell place, and they say she's got it half paid for. Fancy sure knows how to work the tables."

"You should have seen Dirty Face today when the blonde left to get a man's steak done browner," breaks in Goldie, eager to bear her part in the conversation. "The blonde walked out as you please, with her head up; you know how. And the man growled out something about 'slow service,' the way they will."

"Oh, yes!" they all agree.

"Well, Dirty Face she made up a mouth, all screwed sideways; you've seen her. And the man caught her doing it, in the glass, and he turns to her with a funny look, and says—"

But you unfortunately lose his retort to Dirty Face as you pay your charge and leave the restaurant, meditating on the limitless possibilities of the repartee.

At the café on Grand street kept by Malbin—a typical Russian in name—music is furnished by an electric attachment, and seems to be decidedly modern: the pathos of "If Only You Were Mine, Dear," has now usurped the moody melodies of Great and Little Russia. As usual, the bill of fare is printed in English, with a sprinkling of German, Hungarian, French and Russian dishes. *Borshtsh* is good to begin with if you like something cold and sour. It is a pale pink beet soup covered with foamy curds, exceedingly popular with the White Czar's people, among whom it is eaten with wooden spoons, often with two or three peasants sitting on the floor to share one bowlful. Delicious pumpernickel and pats of unsalted butter are its fitting accompaniment.

Malbin's guests are among the prosperous members of the community, business and professional men for the most part. This used to be the fashion-

able Russian café, though now it divides honors with the Russian Inn, the degree of fashion being determined by the amount of learning and attainment that can be assembled at one time. Across the room sits a short, capable-looking man, who is pointed out to you as the president of the Russian Revolutionary Society in America. The dreamer and the enthusiast are nowhere apparent, so that you are not surprised to hear that, like most associations, the Russian Revolutionary Society exists largely to raise money among its supporters.

"But there is no revolution," you protest, "so where does the money go? For bombs and hand-grenades?"

Your jesting is merely answered by the baffling Russian smile, which may mean assent or else such total lack of comprehension on your part that all answer or explanation would be lost on you—which, you can never know. Exile goads even the impulsive toward discretion.

If you would know how a poet keeps a restaurant in order to have leisure for writing, go sometime to a modest café opposite the Educational Alliance and there you may see at work the only epigrammatist, punster and satirist that these people have. The room is small, the wallpaper ugly and the tables few, but the tea is good and it is presumably for tea that you have come. The poet himself sits at one of his own tables with his back to the door, a slender, gray-haired man of fifty, bending over a large sheet of foolscap on which he is inscribing from right to left the square, even characters of an epitaph which he is composing for a prominent Russian banker in Boston. The poet rouses himself apologetically to don his coat. His wife brings in the glasses of tea, while he returns to the weighing of word against word, though at intervals he enters briefly into the conversation and twice he climbs to the high shelf behind the tiny counter where he keeps manuscripts and books.

Two books he has already published, besides a collection of American patriotic songs translated into Hebrew.

His "*Massechet Amerika*" (Treatise on America) is a telling satire on the conditions which meet his people in this country. A work of equal merit in one of the living languages, it is said, would have brought its author world-wide renown; but writing in modern Hebrew he cuts himself off forever from a wider hearing.

There is humor and originality of thought in his epigrams as well. Five hundred of these poems he has collected in a volume which is the first of two. The second will not appear until he has written five hundred and five more songs, to make just one thousand and five in all. For Rosenzweig is nothing if not allusive. Like all his race, his memory reaches back more than twenty centuries, to Solomon who "was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Dārda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five."

You take your leave, scarcely venturing on leave-taking, so engrossed is the poet again in his Boston commission—an epitaph with interruptions. The score you settle with his wife. His thoughts are with the living and the dead; he has no genius for changing silver. As you cross Seward Park, so hardly won from an indifferent city, the little lights of other small cafés shine out to you in more appealing fashion, now that you know the dauntless hope shut up in one.

The Russkaya Gastinitza has cast its spell upon you too. Thither you go to watch the theatre crowd that comes from Hauptmann's tragic "*Elga*," from Gordin's "*Kreutzer Sonata*" or from Thomashefsky's "*Talmud Student*" at Thomashefsky's play-house. The two long rooms have now been thrown into one square hall, with the piano and orchestra moved toward the middle. At one table sit a journalist and his wife from Little Russia—the country stretching from Kief to the Crimea—and a lawyer who is addressed by the title Councillor and who speaks of

learning Italian by the phonograph method.

"We Russians have to be linguists," he remarks. "You Americans do not feel the need. Wheresoever we exiles find a home there is one new language to be learned. Compulsion makes us linguists against our will; with you it is free choice."

The journalist is the dramatic and musical critic on the staff of a leading conservative daily with whose editorials his keen Socialist sympathies can but rarely agree. His wife comes of a well-known Socialist family and a brother of hers is the author of the latest book on the philosophy of Karl Marx. Across the room is assembled the party of the one Jewish representative in the Legislature of a great Western State, the first Hebrew in the legislative halls of a Scandinavian assembly. In deference to him, perhaps, the orchestra now breaks into a Sousa march, "The Stars and Stripes Forever," which is hailed with applause by his whole party. Though he bears the name of one of the Pilgrim fathers, he is a true Westerner in his love for the open lands. "New York is all right to come back to," he says; "but there certainly is no place like the West."

Platon Brounoff and his family are here tonight, and his pupil rises to sing a song of Brounoff's, which humorously describes the Hebrews of today under the name of Little Solomons and Little Moseses. The song is exceedingly popular in the Ghetto, though there are some who think its tone too light and mocking.

At the farther side of the café, by the orchestra, a plump, dark-haired woman in black has been sitting all the while, her hands full of knitting. Opposite sits her husband. She is a great favorite and her rising to sing is the signal for general applause.

"She is worth hearing," the whisper goes around. "She is an Italian and

used to sing in the same company with Caruso in Italy before he got his fame."

The waiter lingers for your order. *Borshstsh* you decide on—equally unmanageable is *shtchee*, the other name for it, this peasant dish which may be either beet or cabbage soup. Then for the first time you taste *blinces*, a truly delicious entrée dear to the heart of every Russian. What you see is four little yellow pancakes rolled around pats of cream cheese and one end tucked in. "With cream à la Enterp" reads the menu—an unsanctioned shortening of "Enterprise." According to New York law every corporation must have an English name and so the sponsors of the Moskovski Traktir are officially known as the Enterprise Company. So you learn that the thick cream dressing which adds a final toothsome to the *blinces* is a specialty of the house.

Once more is music heard. This time it is from Glincka's opera, "Nitalka Poltanka," named for the heroine. Russian to the core, moody, mournful, monotonous, with much sweetness and more regret, with bursts of strange excitement and lapses into the steady march of impending doom, Glincka has woven the spirit of his nation into the score of his opera.

The patter of rain against the windows and dripping from a skylight as you descend the stairs prepares you for drenched sidewalks and a flowing street. Brounoff's party hurries for a car. As you wait in the doorway for the next to come, the first faint strains of Schubert's Serenade float from the open windows. The tall Russian journalist beside you glances down at his wife. "It makes me think of a fellow waiting for his girl," he says.

Now the words of the serenade begin—Heine's verse in Russian—full of the pain of parting, the sweetness of suspense. There must always be music where exiled Russia eats.



"DOES she know her to speak to?"
"No, only to talk about."

"THE TIME AND THE PLACE"

By Hester Douglas

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 1.

DAPHNE DEAR:
Oh, such mind-waves as I'm sending speeding out West to Denver tonight! Surely you're restless—whatever you may be doing—and your thoughts are roaming Eastward and to your friend Ghlee. Well, I know I'm not going to sleep a wink, my dear, and so neither shall you. That's to pay you back for running away and leaving me. Really, how could you be so cruel as to rush off to visit Bunny when you knew I refused to sail with Dad in May in the firm expectation of playing around with you in some nice, quaint, sleepy sort of spot unknown to fame? Why, we'd planned it ages ago! I've no sympathy for Bunny whatsoever. Tell her so, please, and give her my love while you're doing it. What if her husband did have to race to London on business, was that any of your affair, pray? You didn't marry Bunny and promise to look after her. Oh, Daphne, people do impose upon you so! How you ever found the time to get engaged to Bob I can't imagine.

But to business, dear, before I write another word. Surprised at my address—aren't you? Well, as soon as you recover from your surprise, please digest the fact that for the time being I am Miss Mary Johnson, of Newark, New Jersey, bookkeeper and clerk at the Hotel Ashford, North Asbury Park, and having assimilated that important information, kindly remember for future reference that your friend Ghlee Lovell, worn out by the winter's gaieties, is taking a most essential rest-cure at a sanatorium, under strict or-

ders of her doctor to hold no communications with anyone.

There! Are you mystified? I shall hasten to elucidate.

I don't believe I mentioned in my last letter that I was going to spend a week with Harriet Fowler at Allenhurst and was miserably bored at the prospect, did I? Well, Harriet's been urging me every summer since school to come out there. Your treacherous defalcation seemed to remove the last shadow of a plausible excuse, so thinking not only to propitiate Harriet—who's really a dear child when she drops her airs and graces—but also to escape a dreadful week in Boston with Aunt Sarah, visiting some disapproving cousins, I accepted. With my fortnight at Edith's that would take me up to the twentieth, when I sail to join Dad in Paris.

I'll spare you Aunt Sarah's sad protestations at my wilfulness in going on to visit people she'd never heard of. Dear, funny Auntie! In the end I managed to appease her scruples, and Céleste and I caught the three-twenty-five for Allenhurst. I'd forgotten what a lot of places there were on that Jersey coast—I didn't remember any except Seabright—and I'd told Céleste we could surely get our drawing-room seats after we started. There wasn't one to be had. In vain I tried all my charms on the porter; he was obdurate. So back we had to trail into one of the hot, crowded cars, Céleste, needless to say, twice as grieved as I was. French maids are funny—so frightfully adaptable to new surroundings. One would think she had lived in hot-house luxury all her life, and she's only been over

six months. I flopped into a seat beside an indefinite little woman in a vivid red hat, and tried to forget the heat in the perusal of my magazine. Suddenly, without any warning, the woman toppled over on me and gasped an appeal for smelling-salts. I flashed mine forth, got the window open, and fanned her poor, tired, white face until the color began to come back into it. She felt better in a minute and feebly tried to thank me. Well, all my sympathies were aroused now, and soon I had her story out of her. Nothing thrilling at all, Daphne, but all the sadder for its commonplaceness. She's a bookkeeper at a drugstore in Newark. And I laughed at her red hat! She gets two weeks' vacation and had hoped to spend them with her sister in the country somewhere. But about two months ago her eyes began to give out from overwork and she had to spend much more than she could afford at the optician's. She saw an advertisement for a bookkeeper at a hotel in Asbury Park, wanted as substitute for two weeks, and she wrote and got the place. That's to be her vacation! She thought the air would do her good, but by the utter weariness of her expression I felt that absolute rest alone would save her. I begged her to give it up, but she laughed at me, of course, and said it was impossible. While I was pondering what to do, a brilliant idea flashed upon me. You know the course in bookkeeping and stenography which I took the year after I came out, that amused the family so when I had a wild craze for learning something useful. The finger of destiny pointed unmistakably to Asbury for me. I exploded my idea upon the little bookkeeper. At first it was a hard matter convincing her of my sincerity, but that once done the rest was easy. Difficulties blew away before my determination. Would I promise to keep my place, no matter how hard I found it? Her future standing might depend on her work here. Of course I would stick out the two weeks to the last minute. Could I manage to dress the part? She did not want to be accused

of wearing stolen finery. Certainly, nothing but my simplest, plainest tailor-mades should ever see the light of Asbury. Was I quite sure she was doing right? I believed every Sunday School teacher in Newark would approve of her conduct.

Then to details. I hastily summoned Céleste. At first voluble with protests, a hint that she should have the time at her own disposal quickly soothed a troubled conscience. Once won, she proved a stalwart ally, full of able suggestions. In five minutes the plans were formulated. Céleste and Miss Johnson were to leave the train at Allenhurst. Céleste was to rescue the trunk that contained my plainest dresses and send it after me to the hotel in Asbury. The others she would take back to New York with her. I did weaken toward my hat-box—such a darling leghorn that I haven't worn yet!—but Céleste was firm and insisted my blue sailor was more than sufficient. Her only other task was to telegraph the Fowlers when she reached New York. As for Miss Johnson, she was to go to that sanatorium in the Catskills for two weeks under my name and at my expense and forward any letters that came for me and post any I sent her. I told her she'd simply have to go there, or I should be found out surely. She'll be a new creature in a week. Then I dashed off a letter for her to post to Aunt Sarah, telling her I had suddenly decided to take a two weeks' rest-cure and would join her at the house in New York the nineteenth. She will be rampant at first at my not having consulted her, but she's used to my whims and what can she do off in Boston but groan to the cousins over my sins? Admit it was all rather ingeniously planned, dear, won't you? And every minute the scheme seemed more alluring. Really, when Céleste and Miss Johnson got off at Allenhurst I felt freer and more independent than I have for years and years, ever since the time I ran away when I was a tiny girl to seek my fortune.

At North Asbury, my destination, a porter rushed for my suitcase, but, de-

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terminated to be consistent, I refused to give it up, found my way to the trolley and alighted at Fifth avenue, of all inappropriate names. Don't you love it?

As I went up the steps of the hotel, one of a long, monotonous row of buildings, my courage dwindled a little; but I did not regret what I was doing, no, not for an instant. Mrs. Ashford, the proprietress, whom I recognized, the minute she spoke to me, as a cat—spelt with a great big C—met me inside the door and I introduced myself. She seemed a bit taken aback at my appearance. I did wish my dark blue suit didn't fit so perfectly; anyway, to allay suspicion at the outset, I admired the furniture of the living-room in a tone of dazzled awe and she recovered enough to snub me as she showed me to my room. Over the kitchen, my dear, and no blinds or shades! Isn't that abominable? Oh, poor little Miss Johnson! I shall have to buy curtains tomorrow. As soon as I was alone I put away my bouffant and arranged my hair, parted and coiled low. So much more suitable, don't you think so? And really it's rather becoming and goes well with the tailored waists I shall wear here. Supper was at six. I have a little table to myself in one corner—which is a blessing. I was frightened to death for fear Mrs. Ashford would honor me. There are very few people here yet—two smiling old ladies who use toothpicks, a cross, rheumatic dowager from Trenton, and a funny little rouged-up widow with an adorable pink-and-white kid, whom I shall play with (if I'm allowed to).

My work begins tomorrow, so I'm using this evening to write you this lengthy and full account of everything. No one but you would understand why I adore it so—this little escapade in a second-rate boarding-house. But you do, don't you? Somehow it seems as if North Asbury were the wide, wide world. Oh, we poor, guarded hot-house blossoms!

It's only ten and I'm going to run out to look at the moonlight on the ocean. Alone? Of course; it's quite

proper for bookkeepers. Good-night, dear. I shall write tomorrow.

GHLEE.

P. S.—There's one man here. He came in late to supper. He looks rather nice and interesting, but he passed me twice and never noticed me. Mrs. Ashford says he's a bank-clerk.

II

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 2.

DEAR BOB:

A line to tell you that I'm at the Hotel Ashford, North Asbury Park, playing the harmless rôle of George Brown, bank-clerk. No, I have not committed any awful crime, nor am I hiding in guilty terror from the relentless pursuit of the law. Hear my tale. I had just finished the scheme for my new novel and was impatiently eager to get to work on it, when one of those confounded nervous headaches got me in its grip and turned me from a harmless scribbler into a raging autocrat for three days. Doctor Stanton fell in for a little too big a share of my anathemas—I fancy I was a bit explosive now and then—for, when I emerged, weak but gently repentant, he refused to be conciliated even by subtle doses of flattery, and ordered me down to Asbury the next day for two weeks of absolute idleness.

"Why Asbury, of all places?" I argued. "I thought it was a blazing boardwalk buzzing day and night with bands and merry-go-rounds."

"Not in June, my dear boy," he corrected me. "You'll find it a soothing haven of babes, old ladies and rolling chairs."

I could only groan in helpless horror.

My plea for even Atlantic City in preference (you can see how desperate I was) was of no avail, because he insisted I would know people there. It came out the old fellow had already gone so far as to engage a room for me at a boarding-house kept by some impoverished gentlewoman retainer of his. You know what that means—rotten

food, stuffy parlors and tearful reminiscences of former grandeur thrown in extra. But these benevolent philanthropists are as hot about recommending their protégés to other people as they are wary of trying them themselves.

However, you've not heard the best of it yet.

"I'm introducing you there as George Brown, a bank-clerk with two weeks' leave on account of a severe breakdown," he had the nerve to tell me. "You know that book of yours was a winner, my boy, but it has enough daring and spice in it to make you an object of hero-worship among the boarding-house ladies. Even your gruffest manner wouldn't save you. And your reputation as a woman-hater would make things ten times as lively. I'd have you back here in half a day. As it is, you'll have all the seclusion you want as a broken-down clerk on half-pay, with a bearish frown. Keep out-of-doors, don't think, and you'll come back in a fortnight a new man."

And actually, Bob, here I am—and it's such an awful place (the name's the only good thing about it)—with two desolate weeks before me. The people aren't even types; they're nonentities. Mrs. Ashford, the hostess of this melancholy, unhallowed gathering, is a fearful personage. I am doomed to hear her whole sad story daily; I foresee it.

Oh, why in heaven's name did you have to be in California just now? Your company would transform this funereal existence here into a broad farce.

Yours,
STANLEY.

P. S.—The only decent person in the house is a modest little bookkeeper who arrived yesterday. I shall study her if I get a chance. She seems human.

III

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 2.

DAPHNE DEAR:

So very much to tell you that my

thoughts can hardly wait for my racing pen. Oh, what a poor substitute writing is at best for seeing people and talking to them! How do I know what mood you'll be in three or four days from now when you get this?

Well, Mrs. Ashford explained my duties this morning and I've been fairly busy ever since. Really nothing formidable. I write the menu-cards, make out the bills, and stand on guard behind the desk at certain hours. Much the worst of it all is my enforced intercourse with her. Oh, how she snubs and patronizes me! Of course there is a deliciously humorous side to it, but when I think of poor, weak Miss Johnson I get furious. She would have made a model victim indeed. I'm not half abject enough.

I had a word or two with the bank-clerk when I handed him his mail after breakfast. He's much more interesting than his name—George Brown; rather vapid, isn't it? But such nice gray eyes and the most wonderful smile. It's really fascinating, Daphne; you remember it long afterward. Mrs. Ashford was hovering around, or I would have started a conversation.

Don't worry; I'm not forgetting my position (oh, how funny that sounds!) nor imperiling poor Miss Johnson's reputation. But even a bookkeeper can speak when she's smiled at, can't she? Especially when its only a poverty-stricken bank-clerk.

Oh, what a bore Mrs. Ashford is! It's so hard to be charitable to bores and allow them any virtues whatsoever. Such a bundle of tedious gossip, petty tyranny and consummate smugness. She said that Mr. Brown—he ran when she tried to speak to him this morning, the nice man—was very selfish to let his illness be an excuse for a forbidding manner. If only he'd let her tell him what *she'd* had to suffer. I was furious. Surely that martyr-like merriment certain people assume isn't one bit more estimable than undisguised lamentings. As if the hideous old songs she starts to quaver when anyone comes around helped any living being. And his smile—oh!

Five o'clock now, with an hour at my disposal. I shall fly to the pier with a book. Really the air is wonderful here, full of salt and sweet clover and all sorts of fragrant things. As for the ocean, it sings only one song to me: "It's good to be alive and it's good to be free." More later.

Evening.

Why you didn't half tell me how delightful "Dreams and Doubts" was, Daphne! Such quiet humor and so deliciously untrammelled by convention. He laughs so gently that you don't realize until afterward what havoc he's made of shams and unrealities.

What is he like, dear? Bob must have talked of him, as he's his best friend. I've heard that he is diffident and reserved with strangers, utterly charming with his friends and most uncompromisingly indifferent to women. I could have guessed that! Oh, how funny it will be when he wakes up some day and some of these nice, serene little notions of his about our sex stare at him in print to mock him! He knows such a lot about everything else, but everything else will be nothing some day. Do write me more of him. Oh, how I envy him, for he's free, free as a bird! He tells others to be free, too, but doesn't he know girls can't be, foolish man; that if they once fly away they're caught and kept in cages forever afterward?

Oh, Daphne, you don't know what this means—this taste of freedom. How can I go back? Oh, nonsense; probably I'll desire nothing more when the day comes.

Well, whom do you think I met on the way back? The bank-clerk, of course, and we walked home together. I told him how thrilled I was over "Dreams and Doubts." He'd read it, too, but seemed surprised, asked if I always read books like that and looked at me curiously. Really, are bookkeepers so very much lower in the scale than bank-clerks? Pray, why shouldn't they have quite as just a claim to good taste? I'll ask him some day—if we progress to personalities.

I'm dying to hear from you, Daffodil dear; if only Denver weren't so far away! I sent off a propitiatory letter to Aunt Sarah today for Céleste to post. It would spoil half the fun if she knew. I also eased my conscience by writing a confession to Dad. How did I dare? Well, you see, if he doesn't look at things in quite the light I do, my holiday will be over by the time I hear from him. It's really perfectly safe here. Not a soul I've even seen before. The people all go in couples, linked arm in arm. Perhaps Mr. Brown and I will, too, some day! Oh, don't look horrified. He's the most sensible man I've ever met.

GHLEE.

IV

NORTH ASBURY PARK, JUNE 3.

DEAR BOB:

I was wrong to judge so hastily and pronounce this place utterly unprofitable. True, my hasty judgments of my landlady and fellow-lodgers were justified. They are intolerably estimable and tiresome. But, let me see, did I happen to mention a young woman, the bookkeeper? Really, she is one of the most interesting types I've met in years—so much above her station in culture and refinement. I came across her on the boardwalk yesterday afternoon, and what do you think she was reading? "Dreams and Doubts." Yes, and criticized it in an understanding way that surprised me. Poor little girl, I am sure she has known better things. I shall try to find out something of her history. She must be very poor, almost destitute, in fact, working in this second-rate hotel for some pitiful stipend. And she dresses so plainly. Isn't it really marvelous she should have the discretion not to launch off into fineries and extravagances? She looks neat and trim, she has a very graceful, active figure, but her clothes are so simple they must cost her almost nothing. If I get to know her better I shall ask her about it.

Strange, Bob, but I feel no shyness at all with this modest, sensible little

girl of low birth. If there were more of her kind, you would not have to force me into the frivolities. If your fiancée's friend, Miss Lovell, were on this order, I should count it a privilege, indeed, to meet her. But charming though she may be, I am always at a hopeless loss for anything to say to these self-assertive, pampered beauties.

I am standing the tedium of doing nothing better than I thought I would—sleeping, dreaming on the beach, taking long walks into the woody country—the time fairly runs away.

It is maddening not to be able to hear from you in return. California seems continents away.

Yours as ever,
STANLEY.

V

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 6.

DAPHNE DEAR:

I am certainly going to do something to help this poor young man. The more I see of him the more convinced I am that he is remarkably clever and worth while. Dad has simply got to do something for him, get him a position in which he has some opportunity of using his talents. It is shameful for him to be drudging away as a clerk. He cares more for writing than anything else in the world, he told me, but of course he can never accomplish anything in that wretched bank.

He is so different from the men one meets. You know I have rather a talent for drawing people out, but all my arts have failed with him and I rather like him for it. He seems to be far more interested in discussing books and ideas and—well—in little me. Oh, what do you think? On the beach yesterday he said I was so sensible not to squander my money on clothes and assured me I looked just as well in the neat little dresses I wore, which he supposed I made myself. Oh, dear, how I had to struggle to control myself! If the dear, innocent man only knew what I paid for my shoes alone!

Oh, it's too delightful! Such a refreshing contrast to the men who know the price of everything one has on.

I haven't had time to read much lately—Mrs. Ashford keeps me pretty well occupied—and when I can get away I always dash for the beach. What are you reading yourself? It's quite marvelous we have so many tastes in common—I mean Mr. Brown and myself.

He loves poetry—Browning for ideas and Rossetti for music. Meredith, among novelists, stands first. Do I need to say more? We are both ardent hero-worshippers. Needless to say, we have subject matter for conversation.

Oh, don't think I'm becoming a socialist. Of course, I realize that when he finds out who I am it will all have to end. We could never be on the same footing and everything would be changed. But let me forget all that and just live in the present. It's all so real and living—nearer the bottom of things than I've ever sounded before. Good-night, dear.

GHLEE.

P. S.—I suppose a bank-clerk is usually considered quite a common sort of person—isn't he? I just wondered.

VI

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 6.

DEAR BOB:

I really don't know what to make of this little bookkeeper. She seems as out of place in the sordid surroundings of this vulgar boarding-place as a gardenia among dahlias. She was simply exquisite this evening in a little blue cotton thing. Her eyes—I can't remember exactly what color they are—suggest twilight skies and moonlight; all that is mysterious and beautiful and serene. Her thoughts are as pure and lovely as her face. If ever a girl had a soul, Bob, it's this poor, lonely child.

I've had several long talks with her, but she doesn't speak about herself much. Mrs. Ashford tells me she works in a drug store in Newark. Isn't it really dreadful? I don't know exactly how to bring up the subject, as,

of course, she considers me in much the same position as herself, but I must do something for her. It is intolerable to think of her struggling on year after year in hopeless poverty.

Don't think I'm getting sentimental, old man. I realize, of course, that the time and the place accentuate and vivify her charm. Doubtless in New York she would be almost commonplace.

STANLEY.

VII

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 9.

OH, Daphne dear, why don't I hear from you? I was wretchedly homesick last night and nothing but my sacred promise to Miss Johnson kept me from decamping this morning. I am so nervous and lonely. Really, I should almost welcome Aunt Sarah's scoldings. It's all right to get a glimpse of another side of life now and then, but a glimpse is enough. Am I an inconsequent, giddy weathercock? Well, I suppose so. But Mrs. Ashford is so horrid. Two nights ago it was so very warm I slipped into my simplest muslin for supper, and she told me her employees were not expected to outdress the "visitors." I said nothing, but froze her with one of my iciest stares. She simply shivered. Horrid old cat! And she looked such a fright herself in a fussy, finicky fowlard.

Of course I was foolish to offend her. Especially as ever since that evening she has effectively prevented my seeing Mr. Brown by firmly attaching herself to me during my free hour. Yesterday, to escape her, I had to stay in my room instead of sitting on the sands. Oh, how furious and miserable I was! Well, the time is almost up, so don't worry about me.

GHLEE.

VIII

NORTH ASBURY PARK, June 9.

DEAR BOB:

Why did the doctor ever send me

to this wretched place? I am twice as restless and irritable as when I came. I don't know what's the matter with me. I really think I'll take things into my own hands and go back to New York tomorrow. I ought to be working. A man with any self-respect can't lie around and do nothing indefinitely.

I haven't seen Miss Johnson for several days. The awful Mrs. Ashford monopolizes her entirely.

Come to think of it, I had better have one last talk with Miss Johnson tomorrow, see what I can do for her, and go back to New York the next day.

Yours,
STANLEY.

IX

June 10.

OH, Daphne, it has come at last! I am in love, in love—with only a poor clerk, but I glory in it. It is too wonderful! I cannot breathe, I cannot exist. This ecstasy is too much; I must die of it. You told me I could love—and I wondered sometimes if I could. My fairest dreams never fathomed such celestial bliss.

I have no right to his love, I do not deserve it, but it is mine and I shall never give it up.

It was in the woods this afternoon that we plighted our troth. Oh, glorious destiny, that brought our souls together!

Oh, I can write no more!

Your

GHLEE.

P. S.—Tomorrow I shall tell him who I really am and beg his forgiveness for the deception.

X

June 10.

She loves me, Bob. You must have known long ago that I loved her, this white-souled flower. She loves me. I am utterly unworthy, but she is mine, and her love raises me. Will she ever

pardon my false position? I must tell her all tomorrow.

STANLEY.

XI

CABLE AND TELEGRAMS TO MARY JOHNSON, JUNE 11

Your aunt has forced your address from me. She is on her way to Asbury.

Mille pardons,

CÉLESTE.

Horrified at mad conduct. Leave Asbury at once. Join your aunt.

FATHER.

Your behavior scandalous. Meet me North Asbury five-twenty-five.

AUNT SARAH.

Clerk probably a fortune-hunter who knows your identity. Stop all communication with him until I arrive. I leave tomorrow.

DAPHNE.

TELEGRAMS TO GEORGE BROWN, JUNE 11

Are you mad? Mrs. Ashford writes me my clerk is carrying on a love affair with the bookkeeper. Meet me North Asbury six-thirty.

CHARLES STANTON.

Bookkeeper of course an adventuress who has found out your identity. Do nothing until I arrive. Start tomorrow.

BOB.

XII

TELEGRAM TO DAPHNE FORDHAM, JUNE 12

Am going to marry the bank-clerk. Will you be maid-of-honor?

GHLEE.

TELEGRAM TO ROBERT HASTINGS, JUNE 12

Am going to marry the bookkeeper. Will you be best man?

STANLEY.



MOWGLI MODERNUS

By Arthur Powell

GOOD hast thou been to me; pleasant the days
I have spent in thy courts—till of late;
Thy flavorful fare—who partakes of it pays
In the end, to be sure; yet I ate.

I was naked and brown; but the cool, perfumed baths
And the wearing of linen and silk,
With the foliage-shade of thy still garden paths—
Soon bestowed me a skin as of milk.

Then mine ears were attuned to sweet strains, to low chords
Drawn from strings stretched o'er hollow wood molds;
Till my bosom gave birth to young passion past words
And I sobbed for my lost native wolds.

So I leave thee. Fair cheer follow after thy feet
And may Joy serve the wine at thy feasts.
Here's thy linen and silk . . . Welcome rain, welcome heat!
I return to my brothers, the Beasts.

"JUST BILL"

By Susan Fawcett

"**L**ORRAINE"—how William Loraine Ruthven hated it! No, come to think of it, he didn't, for that was Dearest Girl's name before she belonged to us—"Miss Loraine." Wasn't that funny? But for a boy to be tagged with such a name! Thank heaven, he could some day shorten it to L, though now it figured in its full glory on birthday cards.

Even "William" did not suit him. His soul responded passionately to the unpretentiousness of "Bill"; by rights he should be Bill Smith, running barefoot over the village, instead of "William Loraine Ruthven," red-headed, freckled, of indefinite nose and plebeian longings, living in the mansion on the hill, always dressed immaculately, always lonely, always with a capacity for unintentionally getting into mischief.

For Dearest Girl's sake he almost wished he looked like that pasty-faced, whiney-piney Rutherford kid, "Roland Farquar Rutherford," who looked his name, with his velvet suits and sashes, his girlish treble, protruding, glassy eyes and lank ringlets. They called him pretty; Dearest Girl's friends exclaimed over and caressed him, while he coldly submitted with gently bored air; and offered him bonbons and went into ecstasies when he clicked his heels together with a little bow learned at dancing-school, and answered in languid, civil tones. He was born old, and *blasé* and tired; he could tell the names of all the prominent hotels on the continent, and which had the best service, though behind his back the expressionless automatons woke into life and called him a little tadpole.

Yet for Dearest Girl, William Loraine Ruthven would be even as this—thing—for Dearest Girl constantly asked him why *he* could not come gracefully into the drawing-room, without tipping over a vase or bumping foolishly into a chair and shaming her before her friends. Or she looked at him silently, her cold, beautiful lips compressing, her great violet eyes hardening, her face paling with suppressed feeling, while he stumbled backward a little, his awkward feet not knowing their path, a lump rising in his throat, a dull flush creeping to the roots of his red hair. Poor Dearest Girl, she had so much to endure!

And there was father—Dearest Girl did not like him to say "daddie," though he forgot sometimes—father, so debonair and graceful and easy, yet not a bit like the Roland Thing; father, who never hit the door in the effort to efface himself quickly (and instead called forth extra notice), father, who in his heart, William often felt, laughed at some of Dearest Girl's friends, yet never told. He believed Dearest Girl had her suspicions of father's natural inclination to be common; that she checked it with an aloofness that sent her head a trifle higher, and made her beauty for the moment metallic, unapproachable.

"She's the queen bee, eh, tike?" dad—father had once mumbled; then, forgotten he was there, as she came down the path, twirling her lace sunshade, a vision of dainty ruffles, and that exquisite coloring like the heart of an unfolding rosebud, her firm, scarlet lips smiling, her eyes peering through their black lashes. She was perfect, there was no doubt of that—and he

was her ugly duckling—dad stood between them, as it were. He remembered how father's face had lighted with that look only she could bring, disapproval dying in the old, old way, laughing eyes grown a little tired, searching hers for something he missed.

"Clarice Ruthven's a witch, conscienceless, heartless, only a bit of porcelain, no more than the gilding on a butterfly's wing—it's a shame to see a man like that wasted on that woman. I tell you, Sanford, it makes me sick, hostess or no hostess. How can a mother have a face as null, unswept by feeling, and look at her kid as I saw her look last night? And yet she's a witch; men adore her; she even wins women's friendship, beautiful though she is. Talk to her five minutes and you forget you cursed her in her absence! Sanford, I thought I was done for nine years ago, but when I see her look at that tike sometimes, I thank God she laughed at me once, and sent me away to wander. And now when I feel the old spell return—oh, she knows it! she loves her power and has a heart of ashes!—I have only to remember the shudder for that poor, awkward boy."

Ted Sanford nodded his head and flicked the ashes from his cigar. They were sitting at a little table on the lawn; Mrs. Ruthven was giving a garden party. Sanford raised his glass and looked at it with absent eye.

"You were not the only one, Dickson," he said. "I have not forgotten a moonlight evening in Nice, a promise—and then I heard she was married to Jack Ruthven. Oh, no! I didn't blow out my brains, as you see, though every romantic notion of the sort came. The scars are healed." He laughed shortly. "I fix a wary eye on marriage now from my safe vantage point. Do you remember Major Breeze? The stout old fellow who made a fool of himself all over Europe, turned up at every place she dazzled, and—and, the end?"

Dickson winced. "A fine life to come to that. . . . Well, she can't help it, perhaps; she's a witch, just as some

are born grocers, some artists, some thieves. She is not a woman, only a conscienceless, soulless imitation."

"It's a lie!"

They turned sharply at the childish voice, choked with emotion, and saw William, trembling, pale, undaunted. He had heard all, understood little but that they spoke unkindly of his Dearest Girl.

"She's not a witch! Bridget says witches are burned, and are ugly and old and wicked, and eat little boys—" He paused, breathless.

"Come here, tike," Sanford said in a strange voice.

"No!" said William passionately, and with one great sob fled across the lawn. In consternation they sat watching him vanish; below his breath Dickson muttered an explosive "damn," and lifted his glass unsteadily.

"Oh, I can't say anything, old fellow—I can't get started on that woman now; what little spell she held over me is gone forever."

A silvery voice startled them.

"Moping off here alone, you two? And all these charming girls on my hands! For shame, sirs! Are the days of chivalry past?"

"Ah, Mrs. Ruthven, we were just speaking of you."

She arched her eyebrows inquiringly. "That is very nice, the old and married do not like to be quite out of the running. Do be a dear, Dickson, and talk to that tiresome Lane girl—one must invite some people, you know—nice little mousy thing, sort of the but-tercup style, perfectly fascinating—to herself. There, my same clattering tongue!—she's worth six of me—but not at a garden fête, *mes amis*! And, Mr. Sanford, if you neglect Mabel Rutherford any longer I shall—now guess what I shall do?"

Inconsequently she chatted on a moment, then, with a bright backward smile, moved on among her guests. The lanterns bobbed among the trees like fireflies, now and then one flaring up bravely and getting ingloriously smothered; music stole through the shrubbery, ices were served by deft waiters;

merry voices and laughter, or snatches of song from some sentimental youth, with twanging guitar, filled the warm, fragrant June air. To the thoughts of two remained that white child-face, and one other, subtle, evasive, coolly mocking, exquisite, her draperies like the shielding petals of a perfect flower.

II

It was fall—the Opera season just opening. Mrs. Ruthven had just dismissed her maid, and hummed, as she looked in her glass, a few bars from "Carmen." William, as he stumped through the hall, heard father interviewing his collar button, and sidled away from his vicinity at this psychological moment. More inviting that voice rising clear, defiant and subtly sweet, a Carmen of higher caste.

Truthfully he was not an attractive figure at this moment. He had gotten Dobbs, the coachman, to get him some fish-hooks; he had, however, dug his own bait—an exquisite pleasure—and spent a glorious day fishing. It was fine sport; those simple perch and trout almost begged to be caught—wriggling beauties, how fast he had landed them, wet and glistening in the sun! Perhaps Dearest Girl would be proud of him if she saw his long string, and forget he had knocked over vases, and had an indefinite nose and red hair.

His eyes shining, he knocked timorously.

"Come!" called her silvery voice. He entered triumphantly, can swinging in one hand, mud caked over bare feet, tattered, grimy, blissful.

"See, mother, what I've brought you!"

"Take them away to the kitchen at once—you disgraceful-looking child—you look like the cook's son. Ugh, the slimy things!"

He had never let anyone see him cry. But that choking—he had failed again, and she—Blindly he turned about, everything blurred; he reached out his hands and was clinging to her shimmering satin, his can clattering to the

floor, the fish at his feet. He saw what he had done. On her gown the marks of two wet, soiled hands, water spattered over its delicate flounces, her face—He choked.

"Oh, mother, I didn't mean to—mother, I'm so sorry I ruined your dress!"

Bridget, rushing in at the noise, stood transfixed, her eyes never leaving Mrs. Ruthven's face. The lady turned sharply.

"Ring for Céleste, Bridget—and take this boy away. Send him to bed, where he can't tumble under people's feet."

She had not scolded, she had simply looked at him. Looked—and in a passion of weeping he was borne away in Bridget's arms. She would never love him now; his last chance was gone; he had been a hopeless boor! Always under people's feet! "I'd—like—to—punch—that—Roland kid's—head!"

"What's that, darlin'?" asked Bridget, concerned. But he refused to elaborate, and presently she left him sleeping restlessly. Uncertainly she turned toward Mrs. Ruthven's apartment, then turned back. "The divle-woman! What good would it do? Well, phat if I do lose me place! Oh, the loikes of her!"

Mrs. Ruthven drove away with a strangely troubled conscience, something new in her crying out in longing. Perhaps she was not an intentionally cruel woman, but only lacking one ingredient. This lack of—something—puzzled and saddened her husband.

Through the Opera she sat ill at ease; before the gaudy scenes rose a grimy face with quivering lips—why, he was almost a baby yet! She felt herself push him away with a gesture of loathing, not trusting herself for a moment to speak. She saw that queer look in Bridget's eyes. Impudent woman, she should go at once! Restlessly she twirled her fan, with her brilliant, inscrutable smile faced her little world—but beneath that something tormented. Perhaps she *had* been hard on the boy.

In the box across sat Master Roland entertaining a party of his friends—for the first time she compared him and William with sane vision. Ugh! he was

pasty and unwholesome, a little reptile! It was her beauty-love that William had outraged; she had never before looked on the other side—in short, William himself.

Had William ever fibbed to her? No, he was clean and wholesome—though red-headed and freckled.

"Do you suppose William is asleep?" she faltered, turning to Mr. Ruthven.

"Why, I—I—yes—is anything the matter, Clarice?" stammered Mr. Ruthven, embarrassed, a foolish little laugh on his lips, his face stiffening in astonishment, some new hope dawning.

"He seemed—tired—he had been—been fishing—and he's not used to the sun. . . . Calvé is superb tonight, is she not?" Yes, she could quiet that—something.

But she was as restless back in her apartments; impatiently she flooded them with light, and in the long glass surveyed herself critically. What was lacking? She shrugged her shoulders fretfully; the beauty that to her had been all seemed no more than a statue; the smile she forced died as suddenly.

A deprecating knock: "Please, mum?"

"Is it you, Bridget? Come in."

The woman entered, and stood in clumsy contrast close to her mistress, a strange gleam in her tired eyes, her hands rolled nervously in her apron.

"Oi've come to talk to yez, mum; yez will break his heart intoirly—if 'tis not already done! Yez give no love—oh, mum, if Oi lose me place 'tis nothin'—Oi would do more for th' darlin' child."

Mrs. Ruthven stood strangely silent, the color fled from her face, all expression from her staring eyes, while the excited voice rose.

"Faith, niver 'tis Oi spake of me loife. But Oi've a story to tell yez now of mesilf. 'Twas on the bay we lived after we left the dear ould Killarney, and me man fished. There was a bye, a bright-eyed bye, he was the bye f'r a romp as this William. The humble folk have their proide, mum, their grandeur, as yez. Oi was foine in me new silk wan day, goin' to a wake,

when in rushed the bye, and flung himsilf in me arms, all greasy an' wet f'r he had been draggin' at the net. 'Twas aggravatin', mum, and Bridget has a temper. But words, mum, they can be better than a look—an' they are bad enough—God be merciful to Bridget! I cuffed him, mavournin—the dress was ruined completely, an' me a poor woman.

"He went back to his fishin', his face sullen an' red, the tears held back. I watched them put from shore, an' hated him the time. God forgive folks, mum, for their black hearts—the bigness and the truth of the sea in his, an' just then perhaps its grayness—an' Oi wid the poison yit on me tongue.

"Off the point a storm rose, an' the boat wint down wid all Oi loved, me man an' th' bye." A moment her face was hidden; Mrs. Ruthven unnoticed laid her hand on the other's shoulder.

"And ould Bridget lives wid those evil words ever risin' in her mind, and that face—shure, the good God was hard on her sin. And, mum, 'tis Oi can spake if any can—God keep yez from a lifetime of mem'ry—colleen—for 'tis not a bad heart ye have, Bridget is thinkin' now—yez—it wor just a little bit of a rag of lace—beggin' your pardon, mum. And 'tis time ye knew it."

Mrs. Ruthven impulsively patted the heaving shoulder, saw only beauty in the face contorted, swollen, wet, its untidy wisps of hair above.

"I am sure He has forgiven, Bridget," she said gently. "I am going in to see William. Good-night—and thank you."

III

THE night lamp was burning. Flushed cheek on hand lay William; she looked long at him. He had gone to bed with face and hands grimy, tears marking streaks of dirt over them.

Softly she knelt and drew him into her arms, unheeding her laces. With a start he awoke to feel his hot cheek resting on her cool, satiny shoulder, to see her eyes all wet, looking down on him, brilliant as her jewels.

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"My own little lad!" she whispered brokenly; "my poor little boy!"

For a moment he could not speak for the wonder of it; he blinked stupidly, then a smile overspread his face that made the ugly duckling the beautiful swan.

"It was a lie, Dearest Girl; you were not the ugly, bad witch, were you?"

"The witch, dearest?"

"Yes; they said that—Mr. Sanford and Mr. Dickson—and I always liked 'em afore—an' I told 'em it was a lie, an' it is!"

"Oh!" She gave a little hurt cry. "Oh! They said that?" Her breast heaved tumultuously. "They were right, heart of mine; you've had no mother, my baby!"

Baby! just as if he were a little tike! How funny Dearest Girl was tonight!—but how wonderful! He drew a luxurious breath and lay back in her arms—she was like roses, and he like—like earthworms! Finally she spoke:

"Where did you get that 'Dearest Girl'?"

He turned scarlet. "I called you so to myself—did you care? Lord Fauntleroy called her 'dearest,' like his papa, and I thought—thought it was kind o' pretty," he confessed shyly, "an' not too much like—Roland. I tried to be like him, but I like to fly kites, an' dig worms, an'—"

"And you shall, little man-child; who wants a little beast like that? You

are a boy and not a doll! I have been blind, my sweetheart"—could it be she talking to him with her eyes far away like that? He touched her cheek, but very timorously, for the beautiful dream might vanish any moment; she still spoke on, with expressionless eyes.

"Too proud, too blind, too ambitious—Bridget was not very wrong—'a rag of lace'—a bone and a hank of hair, if she knew the poets—very, very blind— But now"—her eyes came back to him, her lips touched his cheek, unheeding its grime—"now I have my baby before it is too late."

"Don't—don't cry, Dearest Girl—'cause you're sorry I spoiled the dress. An'—an' maybe—if you'll look at me like now I won't knock over vases—after a while—and when I'm big I'll—I'll—be a pirate, and have you proud of me!"

"So you shall, sonny boy! Go to sleep now, and tomorrow you shall dig me some nice earthworms," she shuddered a very little, and laughed through her tears—"nice and ugly and wriggly, and show me how you catch the fish—and maybe we'll let poor little Roland come along too, for he never had any fun!"

A long time she bent her young head on his hand as he slept, until a footstep startled her. She rose, the color surging over face and neck, laughed uncertainly, then silently went to meet him, drawn by the worship in his eyes.



COMPENSATION

By Arthur Stanley Riggs

LAUGHTER and Tears are ever close akin,
And where Tears falter, Laughter ventures in;
Or when fair Laughter, scourged to flight, leaves pain,
Softly the Tears veil o'er the struggle vain;
Nor hides one far from where the other lies—
Each waiting each, within my lady's eyes.

WOMAN-WINE

By John G. Neihardt

I

*O*H, again I see it, touch it,
Fatal cup with many a name;
Make it mine and madly clutch it,
Drink its blasting draught of flame!

*Cup of grief and cup of woe,
Cup of ancient woman-wine:
Victor in mine overthrow—
It is mine!*

Awful! burning lips of Thais,
Kiss me back Persepolis!
Break my heart—I'm Menelaus!
Make me Paris with a kiss!

Smiling Thing with painted heart,
Canker at the soul of Peace,
Thou hast wakened by thine art
All the wanton flutes of Greece!

Lest I kill thee in my fury
Let the heaped white wonders speak:
Awe me as the ancient jury—
Phryne, make me weak!

Darling Snake of Egypt, lure me:
Let the silly kingdoms hum!
Do I grieve?—A kiss will cure me!
Thou shalt give me Actium!

Asker, Taker. Devil-Woman,
Hiss the hellish wish again!
Death fleshed out to mask as human,
Dancer for the heads of men!

Honied Wooer, Victor-Slayer,
Sing me drowsy, take my sword!
I am paid, O sweet Betrayer
Awful as a battle-horde!

Ancient wine of gloom and glory
Wets thy warm, red, wooing lips:
All the scarlet Queens of Story
Touch me through thy finger-tips.

II

Nay! In gentler, sweeter fashion
 How thy warm soul blossoms up!
 Martyr to the deathless Passion,
 Quaffer of the Iseult-cup!

Thou wert heart-sick Sappho, burning
 Downward to the stern gray sea.
 Thou didst soothe the Master, yearning
 For the hills of Galilee.

Thou art Song and patient Sorrow,
 Singing through the gloom of years;
 Light of every black tomorrow,
 Wise with yesterdays of tears.

Thou the doomed eternal Maiden,
 Wailing by the windless sea:
 Thou art Mary, sorrow-laden—
 Pray for me!

Pale night-weeper at the cross,
 Death for thee hath not sufficed;
 Trusting through the gloom of loss,
 Thou didst view the risen Christ.

Burden-bearer, Beauty-maker,
 Sacred Fountain of my life;
 Mighty Giver, meagre Taker—
 Mother, Sister, Wife!

*Oh, at last, my Heart's Desire,
 Build the dream that shall endure!
 Fair white Urn of Sacred Fire,
 Burn me pure!*

*Cup of sweet felicity,
 Cup of ancient woman-wine!
 Vanquished in my victory—
 It is mine!*



“DOES Gladys look any different since she and her husband have separated?”

“Yes. She wears her hair à la divorcée.”

“Heavens! How’s that?”

“Parted.”

October, 1908—7

THE INALIENABLE RIGHT

By Inez G. Thompson

DAVID kept his eyes on his bride and ate nothing. She, having looked about to her satisfaction in the interval after ordering, devoted herself, calmly and contentedly, to her food. Conscious of a vague surprise recurrent in the whirl of his thoughts, David singled it out and discovered that he was amazed at her appetite. . . . The next instant the desecrating observation was lost in a glow of delight at her childish unconcern; and he thrilled, protectingly, at the realization that she was *his* to feed and comfort and care for. He seized a serving spoon and gathered the elaborate garnish of the planked sirloin into a non-descript heap.

"Have a—little of everything," he blundered, striving for an ease to match her own. She looked impassively at the proffered spoon; and he understood, suddenly, what had made Daisy Merrow the most successful, if not the most popular, school teacher in Lethbridge Falls.

"You must learn to serve properly, David," she said, not unkindly. He crimsoned, put down the spoon and sat back in his chair. Daisy ignored his look.

"You're not eating anything," she observed pleasantly. "Aren't you hungry?"

"No," David answered. "No, I'm not." He leaned toward her, across the table, his gray, young eyes a-shine. "I can't eat just for thinking of—us, Daisy," he said huskily. "Do you know what I thought when we stood up to be married, this noon? I thought . . . I thought I'd like to kiss you, once, after it was over; and then go away, alone, out into the woods—

somewhere where I wouldn't see or hear people, and lie down there alone and . . . pray, I guess, till I got used to the thought of—having you. . . . And I thought how it would be to go home to you, about sundown, and find you—waiting. . . . Just you and me alone, Daisy—" he slid his hand, palm up, along the table so that she might touch it, if she would; but she did not see. She was looking at him with a puzzled, gratified smile.

"What a queer boy you are," she said thoughtfully. "You think a lot of me, don't you?"

"Yes," said David, "I do. . . . Do you—think a lot of me?"

"Why, of course I do. . . . David, I'd like to go to the theatre—the best one there is, and have the very best seats. . . . I never went as I'd like to."

Two white lines cut in, sharply, on David's face, from nose to sensitive mouth. Then the innocent clearness of her brown eyes shamed him.

"We'll go if you want to, dear," he answered gently.

Daisy clung to his arm as they went up in the elevator.

"You're real good to me, David," she murmured happily; and this first tenderness moved him beyond speech. In their room he took her in his arms and held her close.

"I mean to be good to you," he vowed. "May—may the Lord deal with me according as I do by you, little girl—little wife. . . . You care for me if I am—awkward about things, don't you, Daisy?"

"Why, of course I do," she smiled up at him, candid and unmoved. "Of course I care for you." He put his hand under her soft, white chin and

held her so while he looked into her eyes.

"Well I—" he spoke with difficulty, "I—love you—I love you. . . . And you don't know what I mean when I say that—yet. I—love you." She flushed and twisted herself free.

"Why, of course," she nodded prettily. "I know you do. . . . David, we ought to get a paper and see what there is at the theatres—we'll have to hurry to get seats."

"Daisy!" he entreated. "Do you really—*want* to go?"

She looked at him, disapproval replacing the momentary embarrassment. David had revered the chaste mouth, the low, tranquil forehead and the calm, brown eyes, under the faint, arched brows, as symbolical of the unmoved woman-soul within. He had never dared picture to himself the stirring of the depths—the sweetness of her face when it should be moved and transfigured by love; but that it would be so, for him, he had never doubted. Yet it troubled him to find that the steadiness persisted. . . .

"I'd like to go to the theatre," said Daisy, patiently cold, "and when I spoke of it first you seemed willing. Please try hereafter, David, to make your decisions and hold to them—not shift about, childishly. . . . I'm rather afraid that you're like your mother."

And, queerly enough, it was in the reiteration of that fact that David's mother, at that instant, was finding jealous comfort.

"Farwell looks like me, but he's got his father's ways," she rambled on to the Durhams, with whom she was spending her first night of actual bereavement, "but David . . . David favors his father in looks, but he's like me in ev'rything else. None of my folks ever set th' river afire, as far as smartness went, but they could be depended on, through thick an' thin! Never any of 'em was shirkers, or went back on their word once they passed it. . . . He'll make a—a good husband."

"No doubt about it," assented Mrs. Durham heartily.

Mr. Durham fidgeted in his chair.

He had known the widow Allura True when she was Allura Babbitt; and even as a small, sleek-braided schoolgirl she had taken things too hard. She was now taking David's marriage too hard—and Mr. Durham found it humanly impossible not to regret that one of his serene home-evenings should be rendered uncomfortable because of the widow True's emotional nature. She appealed to him, next, with faded, tear-dimmed eyes.

"I'd most rather stay with them than go to live with Farwell. . . . David said he's sure she'd want me. . . . She may ask me to stay herself—but if—She'll make him a good wife, don't you think so?"

"Time'll tell an' frost'll try th' potatoes," quoth Mr. Durham tersely, as he rose to wind the clock.

"An' my advice is, that th' next time you feel called upon to make sech a remark, change your mind an' don't," admonished his wife in the seclusion of their chamber.

"Well, let's hear you better that remark," retorted her husband unrepentantly. "What's *your* honest opinion of this match?"

"Get to bed," snapped Mrs. Durham. "That answer of your'n will probably keep 'Lura awake all night."

But, to her own surprise, the widow True slept peacefully. . . . Perhaps it was given her to feel the yearning of her boy, who sat beside his smiling bride, in the unwonted gorgeousness of a fashionable theatre and was homesick for his mother.

Mrs. David True did not want her to live with them, however, and made the fact plain immediately upon her return.

"She—we want to make a good many changes in the house, you know, and it will be better for you to be out of it while work's going on," stammered David, avoiding his mother's eyes. "Afterward—after we get straightened out, you know, why, you'll come back. . . . Of course you'll come back, you know, mother—all rested and—and—"

"Yes, David—yes, I know, dear—yes

Davie—"grief left her wit for nothing but pitiful assent. "Yes, I know—young folks—an' I'll come back . . . when you want—David! . . . Baby Davie—!"

He clung to her like the boy he had been, and she mourned over him with terrible tenderness at parting; but the True temper made mention of unhappiness impossible for either. She submitted because to question would be to impugn David's infallibility; and David was silent because he loved his wife. . . .

How well he loved her was revealed to him in the early spring, a year after their marriage, when a peremptory telegram came from his brother Farwell. As he walked stolidly home with it, one thought persisted, despite the grief that numbed him. The news he bore gave him a logical pretext for telling her, with unsparing frankness, how she had failed him in the paramount need of his life.

Nothing had occurred, in the new order of living, to afford him ground for complaint. With her delight in modern innovations, Daisy combined a notable thrift and every expenditure was made to justify itself. Physically, he had never been so comfortable or well cared for. Beyond that, his craving for love and tenderness was held dumb by her unchanged impassivity. His self-respect he would have sacrificed, thrice over, if appeal could have availed; but the conviction was coming to him unbearably that, underneath that calm exterior, there were no depths. . . . And she had cost him his mother.

The maid-of-all-work, sewing in the neat kitchen, dropped her work at sight of him.

"Missis True? No, she ain't out—she's lyin' down upstairs. She—Mister True, you look—if you're sick couldn't I—do somethin'?"

He stared, curiously, at the genuine concern of her plain face. It was an emotion he had not seen for a long time. Daisy treated her as an inferior, and made her wear caps—departures from custom that stirred other Lethbridge establishments mightily; yet she was

the daughter of a humble neighbor and had run in to "set" with the widow True on many a rainy afternoon in the past. . . . He handed her the telegram.

Letty Mann sent one wail of grief ringing through the house before recollection of her rigid mistress sent her, stifling, to the cellar; and Daisy, disturbed and frowning, was sitting up on her couch when David entered their room.

"What—" she began, angrily. He laid the telegram on her knee.

"My mother is dying," he said.

"I—told Letty."

"You told—"

"Yes, I told her," David's wrath flashed. "I told her before I told you. Is that all you've got to say? Has your kitchen-drudge more heart—more decency than you have? My mother is *dying*! You're going with me to her. Whether you want to or not—you're going!"

She let herself fall back on the cushions and looked at him steadily, her face growing sullen.

"I can *not* go," she said deliberately.

"I say you—" suddenly the words caught in David's throat. "Daisy! . . . What is—what do you mean?"

"I mean what I say," she retorted sharply. "I can't go—I *won't* go! I must—look out for myself first—now. . . . Can't you understand? I can't—go anywhere! When I married you I thought it would be for the better—and I've tried to get you to want to—to *be* something, and get out and *amount* to something. . . . You never want to go out or speak of my going. . . . Stay at home, stay at home—travel around in a rut! It suits you and I suppose you think it suits me, but it doesn't! I'm not contented with being a—housekeeper! And now when I don't want to go you can't make me—you shan't make me—" she began to cry, hysterically, the first tears he had ever seen her shed; and instantly he had her in his arms.

Awed, bewildered, shaken with joy and hope he hushed her—forgetting her words, forgetting everything beside the

wonder of the truth he saw revealed to him. Here, then, was the way she would awaken. . . . Through motherhood.

"She's nervous and unsettled—you'll look after her a little, won't you?" he appealed to Mrs. Nathan Durham next morning.

"I'll do all I can," she consented. Then she looked down at his traveling-bag, and, despite her resolution, choked. "And you—David—if—if Allur—if your mother . . . knows . . . tell her Meliss' sends—"

David caught her hands with a gasp. For the second time since the telegram came he had forgotten his mother. . . .

"But Allura wouldn't have it different," sighed Mrs. Durham as she looked after him tearfully. "She was a mother before all else, Allura was, and she'd forgive—anything—in her best beloved boy. . . . It's th' way of th' world, anyhow. . . . This may be th' salvation of Daisy—David thinks so, anyway."

David thought so with tenacious faith despite the trying time that followed. Tears and coldness, whims and unreasonable temper—all failed to swerve him from the tenderness of his patient devotion. He would have borne more for such a consummation as he waited. . . . Yet it was a weary while. The tiny cry that came to him, in the gray dawn of Christmas morning, checked his pacing and sent him to his knees in thankfulness; and he still knelt so when Melissa Durham sought him, her tired face wistful with the resigned sweetness of the childless woman, and laid his child in his arms.

"Your son, David," she said. . . . And went away and left them together.

"He's known one minute of such happiness as ain't given to many folks on this earth," she imparted to her husband.

"Guess he ain't had so much that it'll unsettle his reason," commented Mr. Durham acridly. "Did you see as any great change had took place in Daisy—or is it too soon to tell?"

"It's too soon to tell," his wife an-

swered hurriedly and hid her face with her impolitely tilted coffee cup. He grunted incredulously.

David, however, clung to evasions blindly. It was Daisy herself, restored to more than her former tranquil prettiness, who put an end to his self-deception.

"Why do you stare at me so continually?" she fretted. "You look and look, without speaking—it makes me nervous!"

David wrinkled his forehead in perplexity, pushed away his dinner plate and stared at the cloth.

"Why—I can't tell you—exactly," he hesitated, "only—when *he*—cries, you know, you don't seem to—mind. You sent Letty, just now, and you always send her. . . . I've never seen you—hold him—or show any—that is, be at all uneasy over him. . . . I thought young mothers. . . . Don't you feel able to—tend him, a little, Daisy?"

"Tend him?" she puckered her faint brows. "Then you think I neglect my duty, do you?"

"Duty? No. But—Daisy!" He got up and went around to her and bent over her chair. "I'm—old-fashioned. . . . You've always said so, dear. . . . And I—I do want to see you rocking—our baby—and—fussing over him, and singing to him th' way—women do, Daisy. . . . I've been looking ahead to it, all this time. Don't you see?"

She drew away from him, unmoved and displeased.

"I see that you're determined to be ridiculous! Can't you understand, once for all, that I don't feel as you do about—showing things? I care for the child as much as you do—no one can say I neglect him—but I don't show it as you do. Now, sit down and be sensible, do."

David pondered it with patient fairness. After all, what *did* he know about it? Certainly David True, Junior, was arrayed as no other Lethbridge infant had been before him—even a masculine eye could see that. In the matter of embroidered garments and countless accessories, Daisy had set to work

to eclipse, in quantity and quality, any similar preparation, thereabout, past, present or to come; and Lethbridge gossip bore witness that she had succeeded. Neither was there any question of physical neglect, for all the loyal soul under Letty Mann's plain exterior yielded itself to an ungrudging service that supplemented, unceasingly, Daisy's routine of prescribed attention. As for all else—mother vigils and bedtime songs and senseless croonings—the child was too young, perhaps, to have the lack make any difference; but when he grew older. . . . David brooded over it.

"Still, we don't know much about them—we men—after all," he confided to Mr. Durham as they stood together in the summer sunshine and looked down at the mite gurgling ecstatically at the leaf-shadows that danced over his perambulator.

"Quite so," agreed Mr. Durham, prodding the amorphous shape with a careful finger. "The mummies is th' ones that knows 'em!"

"But you see," David explained dubiously, "I'm old-fashioned. All I know is the follow-them-around-and-fuss-over-them way."

"Pretty darn' good way," murmured Mr. Durham absently; but the glance he shot was keen. He had a sudden inspiration. "I tell you what," he added sagely, "you let a baby be took sick, an' these wimmen folks forget their new-fangled ideas in jest about two shakes of a lamb's tail! Yessir! They take on all th' worse for havin' held off so long."

"Why," beamed David, "I suppose that's so—yes, that's probably so." . . . Then his face clouded. "I don't know though. . . . It's damp under this tree—I guess we'd better move on."

Mr. Durham looked after him in profane silence.

"A drownin' man grabs at a straw," he muttered. "What I told him was a deliberate lie, as far's his case is c'ncerned—an' I *knew* it was a lie. . . . All I hope is that he'll never find out it was a lie!"

But David (trundling his son home-

ward, was in no doubt as to the fragile nature of this last resort.

"It isn't a hope," he told himself fiercely. "Even if it meant salvation for both of us, I won't have him risked. . . . I—couldn't stand *that*! And I—I'm afraid that, even if it came—it wouldn't change her."

Time proved him a true prophet in his bitterness. Mrs. Durham, roused one midnight by his frantic summons, trudged home in the chill dawn of the next morning questioning, mutinously, the providence that bestowed the boon of motherhood.

"Croup," she vouchsafed shortly, in answer to her husband's greeting. "We pulled him through—David an' Letty Mann an' I—we barely pulled him through." And, although she said no more, Mr. Durham understood, even as David True had come to understand, that the crucial test had found Daisy wanting. . . .

"I suppose you think I ought to have shrieked and prayed and torn about, the way—well, the way your mother would have done," Daisy broached the subject, resignedly, when David's taciturnity had endured for three days. "But I can't see what good it would have done. . . . Still, if you're so angry over it, say what you have to say and be done. Don't act so sullen over what is past and done with. . . . I detest it."

David did not answer immediately. Then: "No," he said slowly, "I wasn't thinking of the past—altogether. . . . I was thinking that he would be a year old, Christmas Day—if he lives."

"Oh, he's perfectly well," Daisy gestured despairingly. "*Please* don't be morbid and—and mawkish, David. There! He's a year old Christmas Day, and he'll be a year older each Christmas Day that follows. . . . Thank goodness I shall be able to get out and about *this* Christmas." She cast a half-defiant glance toward him; but David did not reply, nor did he look at her with the mute appeal by which he had protested against similar speeches in the past. . . . Daisy felt relieved.

As the days passed she tested, little by little, his unexpected reasonableness, always with the same result; and presently, freed from the restraint of his presence and his disapproval, she set about by herself to obtain the social recognition so long deferred. Chiefly because of her calm assumption of superiority, she was conceded leadership in the coming holiday arrangements—the most important of Lethbridge's festivities; and this, with her club memberships, put her in a fair way to reach the supremacy that she felt afforded the proper setting for her activities.

David retreated upstairs with the child, leaving the lower house, without protest, to the committees and "circles" that fastened upon it. Indeed, he welcomed the opportunity for deliberation that the change gave him. The True temper needed time for important decisions. . . . So it was Christmas Eve when he descended to the deserted rooms and took possession of them for his son. . . .

With awkward fingers he dressed the tree he had procured, according to his recollection of Christmas trees—with popcorn strings, made by Letty Mann, with gay candles and tinsel and cotton snow and myriad toys—all topped by a glittering star. Afterward he assured himself that his son slept, safely, with Letty Mann lying near in worshipful attendance; then he closed the doors between, went back to the dimly-lighted parlor and sat down to wait for his wife.

Daisy came in laden with gifts she had received, brilliant from the cold and complacent over her personal success; but her voluble rehearsal stopped short at sight of David's preparations.

"In the parlor!" she rebuked. "Would no other room serve?"

"No," said David stubbornly, "I wanted it here." Daisy frowned at the tone and turned to the fire. . . . The young minister had walked home with her—there were men, she reflected, who were intelligent and ascetic and capable of unruffling companionship. . . . She wondered if she were, after all, going

to be unhappy? Something had seemed lacking lately. . . . She would have thought that she missed David's sentimentality had it not bored her so in the past. . . . Still, he went to extremes in his reticence just as he had in his—

"A year ago—" David began.

"Was a year ago," she said abstractedly. "Please don't begin—"

"It isn't the beginning," he cut her short. "It's the end. And no matter how tiresome you find it—tiresome!" The involuntary word goaded him. "When have I ever been anything else? My love was tiresome, and life alone with me was tiresome, and now being a mother is tiresome. . . . But there's where what you want must give way to something bigger. . . . My child must have a mother. . . . Don't talk—you've had your chance and lost it. You haven't even cared enough to *pretend* to care for me. You've kept the house-machinery going because it suited you to do it—you liked things pretty and convenient and smooth and pleasant. You wanted to be loved and looked out for. . . . Did I want anything? You've never troubled to think. . . . Selfish—selfish—nothing but self to the very soul—"

"David!" She faced about at him. "What do you—do you *know* what you're saying? How—why, how dare you—"

"Dare—!" She stepped back as she saw his eyes, and the startled movement brought him to his purpose. "You needn't be afraid," he said quietly. "But you listen till I'm through. . . . I've got along as we are—and I can get on. It isn't a question of me—it's my boy. . . . My boy can't do without things. . . . He *shall* not! . . . He's a right to a mother. It's his right to be sung to and tended and loved and petted the way—the way *my* mother did. . . . And even if it's a lie—he shall have the lie. . . . You've got to do it, Daisy. . . . That's what I meant by saying he's a year old. He's old enough to begin to remember, and, by the Almighty, I shall give him a *mother* to remember, from tonight—or I shall take him away—him and every

dollar I've got—and leave you here to shift as you may. . . . If it comes to that I shall tell him his mother died when he was born. . . . He shan't find you out, as I've had to, and break his heart over it. . . . I'm buying him a mother. . . . You understand? You've got to *earn* your home and your clothes and your ease—earn it by being a mother to him. . . . I'm ready for whatever you decide. . . . It's for you to say."

"Say—say!" She found her voice with an effort. "Why you—if you—if you dare—if you *dare*—" suddenly she realized the unchanging hardness of his thin, young face. . . . "David—" she broke off, incredulously, "do you know what you've said to me? To *me*? . . . David, you—don't you—love me? You've told me so, more than once—you love me, David?"

With the cold steadiness she had taught him he abjured his constant heart. . . . "No!"

"David—think! David—"

"No," he lied. "Live with that cutting into you th' way I've had to. . . . It may hurt you into finding a heart. I don't love you! You've killed it. Live and eat and sleep with that for company. . . . I don't love you. . . . Only so long as you do your duty—no, more than duty! You've got to *love* him—or make him think you love him—I'll do my part. . . . You hear?"

As she comprehended it, the appeal of her face changed to menace.

"Why—yes. . . . Yes, I hear—" she answered him, slowly. "I . . . hear . . . And now hear me. . . . Do you think you can do this? Do you think you can heap this—this torture and insult on me—and I submit to it? Do you think you can take him away from me if I set out to keep him? Do you? . . . Don't you know, yet, that I'm cleverer than you? You listen then. . . . I'll do what you say. I'll love him and tend him. . . . And I'll wean him away from you. . . . Any mother could—I can and I will!" Her voice rose, shrilly, shaken with rage. "Day by day, right under your eyes, I'll take him away from you—teach him

to despise you and laugh at you. What can you do? If you don't love me you shan't have him! You'll get your way—and you'll pay for it—you'll *pay*! . . . You didn't count on my having an answer, did you? You forgot my wit might be a match for you, didn't you? You didn't think that I— Here . . . David! What are you—David—"

His hands on her shoulders crushed her down, wrenched her back to a painful crouch and there held her, immovably, while the cry died to a whisper in her fear-stricken throat.

"Yes, I thought of it," said a voice that was not David's. "You're wrong there—I thought of it. . . . But I hoped you'd be clever enough to keep from saying it. . . . Where's your cleverness now? What'll it do for you, when I take you like this? Where's the word to match the blow I could give you—*will* give you, *mean* to give you at a glimpse of what you say. What becomes of your threats when I take your throat in my hands? . . . Do you think that man will fight words with words forever? Didn't you stop to think that when you took love and patience and pity away from a man, you stripped him down to the brute? . . . That's what you've got to deal with now! . . . You're nothing to me but a poorer brute than I am. . . . I've made you the mother of a boy—but the boy is *mine*! . . . You'll give him what I tell you to, you'll come and go and act and *be* what I tell you to, and whichever way you turn I'm ready for you. . . . I'm your master! Do you know what that means? You'll learn. . . . We're back where things were in the beginning. . . . Just a man and a woman—with no sham between us any longer and no paltering. . . . Get up!"

She dropped at his feet as he let her go, suddenly, and lay there. . . . "Get . . . up!" he said again. . . . And at his tone she stood up, stumbling, holding her aching neck in both hands, watching him breathlessly. . . .

"Go upstairs. . . . Go *now*," he warned her; and, still watching him, she backed from him to the door,

whipping about on the threshold in a panic of tears. . . . He heard her sobbing as she flew up the stairs to the safety of her locked room; but it brought no softening of his mood.

It was fear and the hurt of his hands that caused her yielding, he knew; and, when she recovered somewhat from the suddenness of his turning, he felt that she would delude herself with the outward quiet of his manner. . . . The old spirit of selfishness and impatience and disdain would show itself again; but when it did. . . . He gripped a chair-back till the wood creaked. . . . Once, twice it might defy him . . . not more. . . . And all that was left him—too faint to be a hope—was the chance that, through fear and suffering and

longing, the soul of the woman might awake—if it were there to awaken. . . .

One of the Christmas-tree candles, softened by the heat, fell to the floor with a "plop." He went forward, mechanically, replaced it, and moved the tree close to the window, so that the chill would preserve the perishable trimmings. One by one he placed under it, again, the woolly lamb, the cart, the jointed bear—all the pathetically ill-chosen toys. . . . And something in the touch of them woke him to suffering. . . . He flung out his hands to the tawdry tree, with the gesture of one who gives to the uttermost.

"And lastly," he said aloud, brokenly, "last of all . . . I give you . . . a mother . . . my little son."



TRAVELERS

By Emma A. Lente

ALL out and out the Lonesome Road,
That leads no eye sees whither,
Three Ghosts went forth with wondering heart;
On Earth their paths had been apart,
But here, they fared together!

Said One: "I fear to go this way!
No treasure have I taken
Of all I owned! What lies before
Cannot make up to me the store
Of what I have forsaken!"

Said One: "No treasure have I left,
But left my toil and sorrow,
And care and pain and bitter grief;—
From all my ills I find relief,
And fear no dread tomorrow!"

Said One: "I fare to find my own!
My treasure went before me!
I leave my loneliness and loss:
In shadows I have borne my cross:—
Now light is breaking o'er me!"

ON STRINGS O' WIND

By Lá Macpherson

"**M**ORE roses."
"Oui, monsieur."
The waiter oiled his hands and voice.

"Madame weel dine weeth monsieur?"

"Yes." The monsieur flushed.

"Bien, monsieur."

And with fat face fattened fatter with smiles the waiter turned on the flaring electric light above the white, rose-laden table.

"And ze hour—monsieur weel dine?"

Lord Arlington looked at the clock, then at his watch.

"Immediately—immediately madame comes down."

"Bien, monsieur."

"The roses—at once."

"Oui, monsieur. I go in ze great horry for ze roses wite." He paused, his fat, kindly face still a-fattening.

"Wite, monsieur?"

"White."

The garcon was thoroughly enjoying the English monsieur who had brought a madame so beautiful to the beautiful Paris.

"Zey are—" he paused again, the light in monsieur's face was, too, so beautiful with the light on it—"what zey call not so many in now ze vinter."

"You mean—impossible to procure?"

"*Mais non*, monsieur! In Paris nozzing ees impossible." And the waiter bowed himself out, pausing outside the door to raise his shoulders and eyes toward heaven to tell the *Bon Dieu* in English that His world was "vairee sweet."

Alone, Arlington looked again at the clock, again at his watch which told the same minute.

Ah!

He started, listening, a sudden loud heart-beat flooding his face—she was coming? He waited, his heart a tumult.

Again silence. He turned to the little table and with trembling hand touched a rose here—a leaf there. How well he knew just how she loved them! He raised one higher—the stem must not touch the bottom or its little heart could not drink. And the blown rose must look away from the bud for fear the full rose should be jealous of the bud and trembling fall to see its reign was over—the bud for fear it should see the full rose's glory and grieving wither because its golden heart was not seen.

Her fancies, her dear, dreaming fancies where everything had a heart and everywhere was a Heart—a Great Heart to feel for those hearts.

He touched them lingeringly, softly. How her eyes and lips would smile secrets to those little rose-hearts! How she would breathe deep, deep, their fragrance into her big heart where surely all the dead roses had found a heaven to bud again.

"And something green—to coax the fairies!"

Smiling he touched the fern, the rich, beautiful fern that spread out its green among the roses, remembering her eager child-words.

"Let's have a fern *always*," she had said, "to hide behind when I am ugly—a great fairy fern with deep shadows at its stem for them to lie in, and I shall play Bo-Peep with you."

He smiled still, the tremulous smile of a man wakened by a June sun from a glorious dream to the glorious day of dream's fulfilment, and still his memory stirred her words to speak again:

"But when my face is tired you must

not peep—and I am often tired. Yet you will love me—just the same?" The wistful questioning!

Was she child or woman? How had he won her—that mystic, dream-woman-child with the gay, laughing heart and the soul of sorrow—he whose life had always been barren of dreams?

Was that his face in the mirror? Ashamed of its light he went to the switch and turned off the lamp that showed its light. The dim firelight was enough. Even in its low, fitful gleams could he look up when she entered—with this rapture in his soul? Husband—wife!

Wife!

Another scene, as men in heaven might think of hell, flashed across the years. A woman—a wife—far back in the darkness of the past—a boy drunk with the knowing of first love.

Love! He shrank.

He saw the passionate eyes shining into his—the eyes that giving a life's love, spiritual, had won a boy's passing love, material—the boy who was the man of tonight, waiting with the great, tender love of years, human as all loves, but spiritual as few.

None had known—none needed to know—a secret, hurried marriage on the other side of the world, a pleasure-ship laden with unknown pleasure-seekers, a sudden wind, a sudden hunger of the sea—shrieks—silence.

"Only survivor, sir." How the man remembered the boy-husband of a week hearing those words as consciousness returned—the unknown, obscure-named boy who six weeks later arrived in England to find a great name unexpectedly awaiting him and a great future in which a past week was soon buried.

The man moved restlessly, fighting against the ghost-wind of that sea.

Yet—"Save him—save him!" Sudden, piercing, a cry from the past rent the silence of the present—a wave from the past rose great, choking a boy's "My love—my love!"

Again the man made a strange, weak movement, this time to turn on the light he had turned off—then paused. Light was not needed to darken the past!

It dared not intrude—a ghost in his heaven! He had grieved—yes, as a boy grieves, but—

Hush! was that a step? No, hers was softer, more gliding. The rustle passed the door. Another step—heavy.

"Ze roses, monsieur. Oh, ze light! I forgot to turn ze lights on."

Again the lights flared.

"Only ze two, monsieur?" The waiter seemed to delight in making the handsome monsieur's face flush.

"Only the two."

"Monsieur weel ring ze bell when madame—?"

"I shall ring."

"*Bien, monsieur.*" And again the waiter bowed himself out, thrilled to think that in two weeks' time he himself would be a bridegroom.

Once more the light was switched off. Strong again in the present, the man stood waiting. She would come in the dimness bringing her own wonderful light, with only the flutter of the fire on her gown, and he would stand just so while she came all in the white she loved—

A rustling!

Yes, her step—hers—gliding, soft!

The fire-flame flickered.

"My love—my wife!" he breathed.

An ash fell—the fire-flame went out.

Eyes tense on the door, he waited . . . it was opening. . . . How she would light the darkness!

Black!

He started. His white love in black—black hat, black veil!

"You must try to forgive me, Lord Arlington," a low, gracious voice sought apologetically in the darkness till it found the dark figure on the other side of the faint fire glow, "your wife—Lady Arlington insisted." The voice was glad, excited.

"Oh!" The word was limp as with falling.

"May I—come in?" Someone stood, a tall, slender blackness, blacker than the darkness of the room, against the corridor lights.

"Do." The polite man of the world now, he moved forward.

"She bade me come here—to wait

for her—to tell you.” The door shut off the light.

“Oh!” Again a stupid sound, but he had been where earth’s language was forgotten.

“In the corridor—quite unexpectedly—after twelve years—to meet again!” The words trembled. “Can you pardon the intrusion—on your wedding day?”

In darkness a hand was outstretched. He groped for—took it as limply as his work came.

“Delighted.”

“I leave for England in an hour’s time, so you won’t have long to bear with me.” Graciously the voice fell on his ear.

“Do you mind the dark?” he stammered. He could not let a stranger see his face—his lips kept smiling, his face flushing so foolishly.

“I prefer it.” A dim figure settled wearily into the chair he placed for it in the dimness out of the fire-light.

“It is restful,” he said stupidly, he who had no need for rest. And away out of the fire-light on the other side he too sat down.

“You must wonder how this dark, middle-aged life has touched the white young one upstairs—how we were friends,” the rich, tremulous voice went on, filling musically his waiting, “but—at her first school I was a governess—she had no mother to love her, I—no one to love. I—loved her.”

A warm flame shot from his heart to this unknown woman. She loved her!

“I—think she loved me.”

“Ah, yes,” his words were no longer limp, “she—she once spoke to me of some dear woman she loved.”

“She was lonely—unlike the others.”

How softly and richly the low voice fell—a low accompaniment to his beautiful dream.

The fire-light was dimming.

“Go on,” he said, his voice shaking; “speak of her. I love her.” And he laughed as men might laugh in heaven.

At the sound the slender black figure moved slightly, as a dying, sleeping flower might move, touched by a night-wind. A moment’s silence, while that wind passed.

“I, too, was lonely—very lonely—then.”

“As I—as I,” a man telling of earth that is over.

Another silence. Through a dim veil dim eyes seemed listening to a distant wind dying, dying.

“Go on.” The same words again, sharp, insistent for the music to his dream, and again the laugh and a quick shamed covering of his face from the darkness which already hid it.

She moved more restlessly. The wind was rougher this time—paining. But again the wind passed.

“I, too, was lonely—” the accompaniment to his dream like a beautiful phrase repeated. “She gave me her warm young love.”

“As for me—as for me.” Surely he but breathed it in his hand, but once more someone seemed listening.

“Yes?” Only a note to remind her his heart was singing.

But still a woman’s darkly veiled, great dark eyes seemed to forget words, listening to a wind. He now moved restlessly—had it touched him in its passing?

“And I—I would have died for her.”

“Yes?”

Again the insistent note—the music must not stop. How it made his heart sing—sing the dream-song of tonight.

“We parted—she to her home—I to loneliness abroad.”

Why that sound of wind—a ghost-wind’s minor note that came so oddly in his dream-song?

“Time passes—a child—forgets.”

Still the music slipped the semi-tones.

“And to my loneliness—came other love.”

Passionate, sudden, the last note startled him.

“Love—for a brief week.”

Something was moaning, hurting—the ghost-wind turning all his singing to minor.

“Then shipwreck—life—love lost. I who had lost more than life—saved.”

He rose sharply, abruptly.

“May I smoke?”

The dark veiled eyes, again darkening, sought again. He did not wait,

for no sound came in reply—only a veil was raised.

Searching with strangely unsteady fingers on the dark table beside him, he found the match-box and opened it. Still a woman's eyes were fixed, waiting—yet as if they knew not for what. A scrape—a little flash—a man's face illumined—his eyes concentrated on the light.

"My God!"

Her cry was as piercing as a sword in the heart.

The match fell, going out as it fell, yet seeking out and lighting in its fall a woman's unveiled face of staring horror.

"The light!" He stumbled blindly, to turn it on. The ghost-wind, drowning all dream, all song, was now raging—roaring in his ears as it had raged and roared on the day when a sea was an hungered. Where was the light? Crazed, his hand sought along the wall.

"No, no!" A cry bringing heart's blood again. He touched a hand holding hard. With an oath he crushed the hand off the switch—the room flared with light.

"Your veil—the veil!" She dragged it down, but he tore at it like a man gone mad until his eyes were on her unveiled face—straining—straining.

"You! My—God!"

He fell back, the torn veil dropping from his hand. She stood dead-still, her eyes alone alive, looking as a long-lost, starving child might look at the window where home and food were.

"Eric—Eric?" The dead lips for a moment lived, forgetting. The dead arms moved out—out to him. He shrank from them with the cry of lost reason, freezing the moment's life in her arms—her lips—her eyes.

For a moment the black figure swayed—for a moment.

Tick—tick—the clock measured eternity.

"How?"

"A strange ship—I was picked up—"

"I see," he said—blind.

And the woman stood, seeing.

"My God!"

"It is all right, dear," she said—"all right."

A soft rustling far away somewhere.

"The light!" he breathed.

She turned it off.

"Oh, my love! my love!"

Did she forget again—for a brief moment? Had he called to her away, back where the wind was raging? As if from the other side of time came the sound of a door-handle turning. No, no; she remembered now. His full young love was coming—coming to the boy spirit that had filled her eternity. Eternity had emptied, but God was there—He gave strength—

"Oh!" A white, radiant figure paused uncertainly in the open doorway. "You—you are in the dark."

The flare of lights behind her showed a face the angels might have stealthily stopped their angel-work to watch for holiday—a face so purely lovely, so strangely wistful, yet with the wonderful look of "home again" in the eyes—the warm, nestling place from the world's cold. The door closed and she came toward them with soft, uncertain steps, the low fire-light touching her.

A black, silent figure stood out of the fire-light on one side; a bowed figure sat silent on the other. And tick, tick—the clock carelessly measured another eternity.

"I am here—Eric?"

She had forgotten her new-found old friend. He, her lover, her husband, had not looked up!

"You"—wonderingly, wistfully—"did not mind my sweet friend coming, did you?"

In silence a swaying figure crept out.

"Oh!" The wonderful, dreaming eyes turned sorrowfully as the door closed. "She has gone away. Did I hurt her?"

The dying heart of the silence was throbbing, throbbing. It must speak, and still it was silent. He must frame words, but again only hers came.

"Eric—she is so sad—and alone—as I was—before you came." The voice was piteous now.

Silence, still silence.

"I"—he rose unsteadily—"have had news—bad news." A hand sought his in quick sympathy, but his was unfound. "I must leave tonight."

"Tonight?" She repeated it like a child.

"Yes," his breath came slowly, "now—*now*."

The door opened.

"A nott for ze monsieur *at vonce*—to read at vonce. Oh, ze light!"

"No!" It was a dying command.

Piteously she stood as he bent to the fire-light. Where were the straggling,

penciled words? He could not see—understand.

Left words explaining—need know nothing—resumed teaching under maiden name—remarry—say whim—burn—say merely note to tell her. Weary—meant to long ago—you remember—clean shot. . . .

With a dazed half-cry understanding came. Blinded he groped for the door.

Clear in the silent distance a shot rang out.

"Oh, ze pistols—*toujours* ze pistols! What zat? I go in ze great horry to see what zat."



AFTER READING HERRICK

By John Kendrick Bangs

"Ah, Ben!
Say how, or when
Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts."
—Herrick to Ben Jonson.

AND BEN—
The pranksome, tanksome Ben!
Did he make answer then—
"Nay, Herrick! What's the matter now?
'Twere well enough for me
To humor thee,
And I'll say 'How'
With very glee
A hundred times and more,
If you will pay the score;
But as for saying 'When,' may I be burnt,
If that's a word I've ever learnt—
At least, I'm thinkin',
Not when I'm out with thee and—drinkin'!"



"WHAT possessed her to marry her second husband on the anniversary of her first's death?"

"So as not to have too many dates to celebrate."

SOCIAL GRAFTERS

By Lilian Bell

IT is generally considered that the accomplished social grafter, who has successfully solved the problem on *How to Live Well on Nothing a Year* is limited to large cities. But if you will stop to think a moment, you will be able to recall from your own experience, that there is no town so small, no farming district even, which does not boast a man who is always wanting a pocketful of nails or a woman who wants a cup of sugar and a pinch of tea, which never by any chance are returned.

This is, of course, its crudest form. In towns it runs more to copying the clothes and hats of those fortunate enough to get their fashions from occasional trips to the city; to borrowing the new songs and stealing new ideas until it must be more of a burden than a joy to be prominent in a town where such liberties are taken, with or without permission.

But for the highest exemplification of real social graft, commend me to the persons who, either from motives of thrift or stern necessity, must get the bulk of their living out of their friends.

If you think this genus does not exist, kindly accept my word for the following bona fide description of an evening spent not longer ago than last week with a friend of mine who, even though she lives in New York on moderate means, when an extra guest means a distinct and noticeable additional expense, yet is the soul of hospitality.

We had been invited to dinner and the table was neatly and daintily set for four when the telephone rang.

This is what we heard:

"Yes; this is Mrs. Blank. Oh, how

do you do, Mr. Soper! Yes. Well, I'm afraid I couldn't this evening. I have made other plans. Why, yes, we are dining at home, but we have other guests already invited, and—well, you are very kind to suggest coming, but I am really afraid at this late hour that I could scarcely make ready for another. I—yes, it is very good of you, of course, but really, I am afraid—Why, yes; there is tea in the house. Yes, even bread! Well, of course, if you put it that way, we shall be most happy to have you. We dine in ten minutes. Yes, I could wait twenty. Yes, do try. Good-bye!"

We three were standing almost behind her as she hung up the receiver and turned away.

The two men said something which began with, "Well, I'll be something or othered," and without any further explanation Mrs. Blank hurried to the kitchen, the pretty table was rearranged and in half an hour Mr. Soper arrived.

He shook hands with us cordially and the first thing he said was:

"I do believe that you Blanks are the only people dining at home tonight in this whole blooming town!"

"Is that so?" said Mr. Blank. "How do you make that out?"

"Why, I just stepped into Mrs. Hyphen's apartment—they are always away for the week-end, so I use their telephone—they never have told me not to—and I called up nearly everybody I knew to ask them if they didn't want good company for dinner and, until I struck your wife, they were all either out or engaged."

We dined, and after several cigars Mr. Soper said:

"I say, Blank, old boy, just go to the telephone and call me East Carlinville 36, will you?"

Our host was a boyish-looking man, but it must have been several years since he had been obliged to fill an order like that. But, fortunately for Soper, Mr. Blank was a gentleman, and went.

When East Carlinville answered, Mr. Soper went to the telephone and said:

"That you, dearie? Well, I won't be home tonight. I am dining with the Blanks in their jolly little apartment, and we are having such a good time that I won't try to come out tonight. I may stay here, if they ask me—" here a jovial wink came from Mr. Soper to the somewhat unresponsive Mr. Blank—"if not, I'll get a bunk somewhere. Don't worry about me. I'm always all right. Good-bye!"

Now, the tariff to East Carlinville was eighty cents, but Mr. Soper airily avoided mentioning the matter of settling, and when we left Soper was explaining that he should find himself perfectly comfortable on the library sofa, and urging Mrs. Blank not to go to a bit of extra trouble for him for breakfast.

Now, I happened to know that even the small item of washing the table-napkins, bed-linen and towels for that one extra guest made an appreciable difference in an apartment where only one servant was kept. And Mr. Soper knew this also, for during the evening he said that his cousin, Mrs. Kemper, had purposely taken an apartment without a single corner where an extra guest could be tucked away, especially because if she had a spare-room it was sure to be occupied, and she found that she simply couldn't afford it.

Our friend, Mr. Soper, was quite frank in explaining how to live thriftily in New York. At one time he said:

"Now, take me, for example. Telephoning costs me nothing, because all my friends let me use theirs. When I want to stay in town over night I can always find some friend to bunk me.

That saves room rent. While as for dinners, I cannot even get around among my friends, I have so many, and I keep up my acquaintance with all of them. I have several friends among the publishers, and, knowing my interest in literature, they give me most of the new books. I know two or three theatrical managers, so I get to all the best plays free. My brother-in-law lets me have desk-room in his office, and there you are! If a man only has a head for management, he can live very well in New York or any large city on very little."

Alas, instead of being the only one, our good friend Mr. Soper, whom all of us board and lodge in our turn, is only one of many. All are not so pronounced, however, and some are more reticent about explaining the details, but they are here, more or less disguised, and all can be more or less recognized when attention is called to the fact that they are neither more nor less than social grafters—social leeches—persons who exist by a system of petty sponging on friends and acquaintances, with never a return of any sort.

These men never have but one cigar and are always smoking their last cigarette. In the friendliest possible manner it is always:

"I say, old man! Got an extra cigar in your clothes?"

There is one young fellow in New York, who has more money than he knows what to do with and who spends it like water, who said:

"In my safe are sixty thousand dollars in notes from boys I have loaned money to in sums ranging from fifty dollars to a thousand, not one cent of which I ever expect to see again. I don't care so much for that. I didn't expect to get it back when I loaned it to them. But what cuts me when I think of it is this: in the ten years that I have been in New York not one of these fellows whose names are on these notes has bought me so much as one cigar or a glass of beer! Funny, isn't it?"

This young millionaire was not complaining of lack of friends or of

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lack of entertainments returned in the proper manner. He was simply referring to the social graft of which he had been the victim, for most of these notes had been the outcome of occasions more or less convivial in nature.

There are, of course, women grafters, but women are not the victims of women. Women have a way of freezing out the woman who drops in at meal-time too often. While women who make it easy for men to invite them to dine or who otherwise become the debtors of their men friends do not come under the title of social grafters.

It is a shocking phase of society which has arrived when we must consider that ambitious young men are the ones to whom this sobriquet mostly applies. They are mostly young men of good family, who are ambitious to be considered as getting on in the world. They find that the pace in New York is not only swift but desperately expensive, so, in order to keep abreast, they sink their best qualities, their self-respect, into the mire of the race, and struggle pantingly on, accepting favors at all hands, reluctant or otherwise, making no return, and forming a class all by themselves of men who are not men, but merely husks of men, void of proper ambition, lacking in a sense of

honor and justice, without self-respect, pitiable objects of the secret scorn of the very ones through whom they eke out their precarious existence, and despised by their best friends.

The social grafter is the only one who does not recognize to what class he belongs. He is self-deceived to the last, because of a civilization which permits itself to be preyed upon rather than affront its offenders by the utterance of rugged home truths which would cause pain.

In the dear, old-fashioned hospitality, where the latch-string always hangs out to friends, we are sometimes compelled to entertain unwelcome guests and make the best of it.

There are few of us so poor-spirited that we would grudge a meal or two even to people we don't like.

But the form of social graft most in vogue at present is the polite but firm pressure which compels us to pay for small luxuries for persons we care nothing about; a pressure which we can ill afford and which robs the act of all the graciousness it might possess, if ours were a voluntary generosity. For the friends of a social grafter are literally held up.

This is not an exchange of courtesies. It is petty larceny.



AN AUTUMN WOOD

By Clinton Scollard

NO cloth in Arras made,
No bright brocade,
Can vie with yonder wood in tint and shade.
Naught save the sunset skies can parallel,
(Or the morn's miracle)
The wondrous color-spell,
And yet how soon the pageantry must fade!—
Gold change to gray,
Crimson to sodden umber lapse away,
Irradiant life fall into dank decay.
Ah, well!
Outward beatitude is but the shell
Of inner loveliness. Within the bole,
As in man's heart, true beauty bides—the soul!

THE THREE MODELS

By Frances Irvin

EARLY on a November morning Renée crossed the gardens of the Luxembourg, where the brown leaves were scurrying and the autumnal glories of the flowers had faded, and entered one of the small streets where artists dwell. Directed by the concierge, she crossed a wide court, feeling as if many curious eyes must be watching her from the studio buildings. She had set herself an unpleasant task, but how else was a woman to support herself, when her most fatiguing and desperate efforts at journalism paid so abominably? After all, no one in England need know how she added to her income.

The idea of posing for portraits had come to her through the chance remark of an American friend to whom she had often sat for pencil-studies, and who had always teased her about her way of "throwing herself into attitudes," a perfectly unconscious habit. Through him she had obtained an introduction to the French painter Larue, whose work she had always admired.

On the door of the first landing a small card bore the name, "Larue," half hidden by a huge tasseled bell-rope. On a piece of paper thrust in the panel and evidently long forgotten was scrawled: "*Je ne serai là qu'à dix heures. Odette.*" Shrinking from the strange and somewhat distasteful atmosphere, she hesitated a moment, then pulled the bell-rope. There was no response. Should she give it up and go away? But she pulled again.

A man came quickly. "Pardon me for detaining you," said Larue, bowing, "but my model was dressing." He showed her into a small dining-room,

decorated with bits of Dutch and Flemish china, and read the note she brought; then quietly and with a detached air took a long look at her.

Instinctively Renée liked him. His wild face under the black hair, with deep lines of concentration in the forehead, his shabby coat smudged with paint, the terseness that betokened a mind already absorbed in the day's work, all denoted the artist and *homme sérieux*.

"I shall be very much interested to use—to avail myself of your services, mademoiselle. You suggest something quite different to me, quite—unusual."

She followed him along a dark hallway, fighting against her distaste, and already vaguely curious for a glimpse of Mademoiselle Odette! Moreover, the approaching adventure was not without fascination. "Of all things, I must not play the *ingénue*," she told herself.

When they entered the studio she was first confronted by a large canvas wheeled out into the centre of the room, upon which a nude figure, crowned with the inevitable mass of auburn hair, stood gazing into a mirror.

In a shadowy corner on a divan the original of the picture was seated, sewing; a loose, dark calico dress hastily flung on, was open at the neck, and showed her slim young throat. The mass of Titian tresses, authentic beyond question, which made her brown eyes look darker in contrast, were an odd accompaniment to the costume.

But she looked up from the satin and tinsel she was mending with a charming naturalness, and the most friendly of smiles, as the painter gravely intro-

duced his two models. Renée's rich black hair, her pale skin and low brow, made her a striking type. Ruminating, as he looked from one to the other, Larue gloated over the artistic antithesis, and the scale of possibilities between them. Already his nervous, expressive hands seemed trembling to begin their work, and his mind was full of images.

If Renée was at first silent, it was because impressions were crowding upon her, and she could not at once adjust herself to the new atmosphere. Mademoiselle Odette, however, felt no embarrassment. "Will you not sit down?" she said with graceful friendliness, as she rose to remove some draperies from a carved chair, the only one in the room. "I am mending a dress that has lain about here for weeks. It would do well for mademoiselle with her coloring; would she not be beautiful, monsieur?" She held the pale yellow brocade toward Renée, at whom she looked with frankly admiring eyes.

"How well you speak English!" exclaimed Renée, much drawn to the pretty creature.

"Oh, I learn it in the *ateliers*; I have much time," she laughed, pronouncing every word with the greatest care. Then abruptly gathering up her belongings, she bade them both good-day, and went out, calling back that she would return "in three days' time, not before." Larue sighed, and for a moment cast troubled eyes on the large central picture, to Renée's idea already completed.

"There is no use!" he exclaimed with a despairing shrug; "if she will not come, I can do nothing. So my picture waits; it is very annoying. Pardon, mademoiselle, it is so good of you to come. If you will sit down, I shall make a sketch at once, and we shall decide the pose, the idea."

Already he was shifting the blinds, adjusting the screens and draperies, creating a subdued corner, flinging a rich mass of velvet across the table, wheeling the great carved throne into place, fingering thoughtfully the yellow brocade.

"This might do later on," he said half aloud. "But, no!" he tossed it away, "just now I need a simple study, something without complication. Just a head—I have the title already—'The Spirit of Autumn.' That purplish blue you are wearing becomes you: just add this dull gold scarf—something soft over the shoulder, and the hair, that is far better when you loosen it. Look toward me again, to show the full setting of the eyes. Can you remember the pose? *Ah, que c'est sombre! magnifique!* It is a new type for me."

"*Sombre!*" Renée laughed to herself, thinking how well the word described the present conditions of her life. The financial disaster that had sent her out alone into the world, added to a great personal disappointment, had crushed her natural buoyancy, but she was determined not to be conquered.

Half an hour passed before he was ready to paint. At times he would stand across the room, regarding her with half-shut eyes. Then he would pull savagely at the blinds of the high windows, move a different background into place; and then, just as Renée waited for him to pick up his brushes, he bade her get up and rest.

"You become stiff and tired. I am glad to see you have not posed much before. The experienced model falls into stereotyped attitudes, and at times is hopeless."

"How about 'Odette'?" she could not resist asking.

"Ah," his face brightened, "she is different. She is not the original of my picture, but, oh, very like! I prefer her to my first model. But she is to be married at Christmas—yes, a rich man, a sculptor, and he is very jealous! I am the only painter she continues to pose for, and that only because my picture is at such a critical stage. As for the classes, the *ateliers*, where she used to pose, that is no more permitted."

His brush had begun to make vigorous dashes at the canvas; he was silent for a time.

"You make an excellent portrait study," he said abruptly. "If I do not

like this I shall try something more fantastic."

She was absorbed in thoughts of Odette, the jealous sculptor, and the painter before her. Did the two who were to marry care for each other; were they capable of standing by each other? In the new phase of life that was opening to Renée the interest grew rapidly. Larue was different from the Frenchmen she had known, and plainly a worker. And her mind kept wandering to pretty Odette, who was to be married at Christmas.

As Renée went home through crowded streets at noon, and sat down at her writing-table, she congratulated herself on her new venture which had looked questionable in the morning, and calculated that she could now earn in one day what she had often been paid for three of "reporting." For the sake of economy she worked without a fire till it was time to go to her lonely restaurant to dine; then returning to her room, she kindled a tiny blaze of two *briquettes*, and sat down before her table to finish some work for early morning delivery.

The rapid tick-tack of her typewriter drowned a knock on the door. Madame Karl had mounted the five flights, and now, unbidden, opened the door and peered in. It was the first evening for weeks that Renée had *not* felt lonely; her fingers were busy with mechanical work, her brain with new experiences. She seemed to be adapting herself rapidly to a new point of view. It was worth hours of cramped fatigue to be the subject of Larue's painting, knowing his genius, his capacity for work. Madame Karl brought back the unsuccessful side of life, and Renée sighed.

Her visitor, slender and elegantly though simply clad in black, wore also the Titian crown of hair, but its authenticity, alas, would have been questionable except by lamplight.

"Here you are alone, and blue, I suppose! Put up the tick-tack and come out on the balcony," she commanded. "We must finish our talk of the other evening." She was one of those frail, strangely magnetic women, full of sug-

gestion, even possibilities, but realizing neither for herself nor for her friends. "Always planning and never acting," Renée summed it up, yet her sympathy for this fragile, futile woman who had been through unheard-of reverses and still kept a certain spirit, who often inspired others to endeavor while seemingly herself incapable of action, had kept a desultory friendship alive, and drawn them together in their poverty.

"I must have some money—I am in actual need of rent," began Madame Karl. "Yet I can't live on less than tea and boiled eggs, and my room as you know is only ten francs a week."

"You would not take the position as companion."

"No, I could not keep the appointment yesterday, so I suppose I have lost the position."

"After all the trouble I took to find it?" said Renée impatiently.

"Don't be cross with me; we must try something else. Herr Brandt will be in the street below to fetch me in half an hour. We can talk till then. I feel like going to some café where it is bright and amusing, but not with him; he bores me tonight. Could we two go alone?"

"Yes, certainly. One can do anything *en journaliste*, and plainly dressed."

"It might be disagreeable," said Madame Karl, fencing. "I should not dare to go with any woman but you; I should not mind going with you, I think."

"Yes," smiled Renée, who was used to these remarks, "I am sure I could take care of you."

"If they stare too much, we can come out and call a cab."

Having brought herself to the point of risking the danger, she decided that she would go another night, and would wait now for Herr Brandt. "Not that I care for his opinion. He is so weak—it has no weight with me whatever. He spends three nights a week at Montmartre, carousing with students and models. I think now he is too old ever to make a serious affair of life."

"Can't you influence him?"

"Heavens, I try—I talk to him by

the hour; I urge him to work, to finish what he begins, to have more ambition. But for hours at a time he idles; either he hates a picture and will not finish it, or he wants to travel, to go to Spain, to see new types. He is tired of me, I am sure, and of all the old routine. Yet he says I possess him, literally, and he continues to paint me."

"You have posed for him for a long time?"

"Yes, he has been such a kind friend—I could not do less. He never pays me, of course. He paid my doctor's bills during my long illness; he was a saint; yet we are only platonic lovers. I am bound to help him, and he likes my type for his portraits."

"Well, pose for other artists," said Renée.

Madame Karl looked at her suddenly. "Go around knocking at studio doors? Is that what you are up to? You must tell me about it. I should not have thought it, you are so—sensible." She hesitated for a descriptive word. "It must be very embarrassing. I don't believe I could do it, except for Brandt."

"I go only to Larue, on a friend's introduction. He is a worker, too ambitious, too absorbed to consider my personality in the least."

"Have you seen his other models?"

"The only one of importance is a most lovely girl, whom he treats almost like a child. She is going to be married, honestly and well. It is very free and easy, but I have not lost my self-respect yet, nor, it is to be hoped, my reputation."

"Ah, my dear, you are moving in fine society. That 'lovely girl' is probably one of the worst characters of the Quarter. Still it is an experience for you. Perhaps you will be able to make a story of it."

"I don't believe what you say about the girl; there is such a thing as being too cynical."

"Well, my dear, don't let's argue about it. I have many other things to say."

Then came the reiteration of the need of money, her child's dependence on her, and a long argument, after which,

considering her straits, she consented to go with Renée in a few days to see Larue.

"To offer myself as one would at a horse-market or fair," she said disgustedly, while Renée shrugged her shoulders with philosophy.

Madame Karl, while singularly dispassionate and clear-headed, perhaps knew more of Paris than many of its most assiduous explorers. The poverty and loneliness consequent on her husband's desertion had thrown her into a bohemian manner of life. Having but a single bedroom, which was both dining-room and drawing-room at times for her friends, she had fallen into the habit of spending many hours at Brandt's studio even when she was not posing for him. She made tea for his friends, or lounged in a chair with some sewing, and the painter had long been under the witchery of her strange green eyes and red hair—authenticity doubtful—and the slim, long lines of her figure, which she could almost bend into a knot.

Madame Karl had a real contempt for Brandt's character, although his kindness to her in extremity made a bond she never could ignore. How often had he mounted the shabby stairs when she lay between life and death, pacifying the landlord, insisting that no care or expense be spared! At times when she thought about it, tears came to her eyes; yet she did not love him, and he only thought he loved her. It was not often that she wept, she had become too hard; life held too little, and she wondered why she had been spared, scarcely able to provide even for her own child.

They leaned on the railing of the balcony, and from the end of the narrow street, as from a vast distance came to them the faint hum and rumble of a Paris evening. The church clock above them tolled ten. In the quiet so charged with meaning Renée forgot her annoyance; her work faded into the background; she, too, began to long for the brilliantly lighted streets and cafés, where Paris was now forgetting its sorrow in light and laughter.

But the moments flew, and Herr Brandt was waiting below. With a last effort to pin Madame Karl to practicalities, Renée arranged that they should meet in Larue's studio in a few days. Then she went back to her work, her mind distracted by the images that Madame Karl's presence and idle, scoffing talk had conjured up—dim shapes of Paris, human beings destitute of will, pursuing some *ignis fatuus*, or held in the grip of a pitiable vice—absinthe, or worse. She fell asleep that night to dream of Madame Karl, in long, sinuous, sea-green robes that wound serpent-like through the translucent depths of ocean and unconsciously ensnared and entangled human souls.

Poor Madame Karl! When she knocked three days after—an hour late—on the studio door, Renée was absorbed in contemplating Larue, and he in the evolving of his new idea. With an impatient exclamation he went to open the door, and led his visitor down the passage to Renée, who introduced them. Madame Karl glanced at the "model's" pose and expression—Renée, gorgeous in green and gold, sitting for an Egyptian sketch—with her inscrutable, near-sighted eyes; and then, fleetingly, at the painter, conscious all the time that he was appraising her good points, "like a horse at a fair."

She had made her black dress, with the help of a little seamstress, and it had cost her barely fifty francs, yet it fitted her to perfection, and her hat had the necessary breadth and sweep. Then, the ivory pallor of her skin, and the blue veins about her eyes—the painter stood absorbed in his contemplation of a third type so different from the others.

The something baffling and mysterious, yet subtly penetrating about the new personality struck him at once, yet he thought of the type, its ideal possibilities, rather than of the woman, in spite of Madame Karl's apprehensions. There was a long silence, in which he walked absent-mindedly about as he gazed, while Madame Karl toyed with her furs.

"I have only sat for a friend, for

portraits," began Madame Karl, annoyed at his silence; "I am not sure whether I could do it successfully for you. The fact is, my finances are temporarily in a bad condition, or I should not consider it at all."

"I prefer an inexperienced model," said Larue.

"Miss Stuart and I are friends, and she suggested my applying to you. I can only sit for portraits, of course."

"You might change your mind later on," said Larue, utterly unmoved, and unimpressed by the drift of her remarks. He seized and held up in triumph a sketch of a sinuous, willowy creature in Botticellian pose, exclaiming, "With you I could work this out—I have had the idea in my mind for years."

The shoulders, feet and ankles were bare, and the limbs veiled in scant drapery. Madame Karl's cold indignation, Renée's smothered amusement, and the painter's complete absorption, held the room in heavy silence for a while.

"Portraits are my forte. I cannot attempt anything else."

"I regret it," said Larue; "we could have been highly successful."

It was impossible to deny that the painter stared distressingly (as many people did) at Madame Karl. When she moved, he watched the long lines of her figure in its clinging black; when she spoke he waited for the uplifting of her strange, expressionless eyes.

When he left the room for a moment, she exclaimed to Renée, "All this is perfectly hideous to me—I don't see how you stand it. But perhaps you don't mind. Personally I should not relish the idea of being shut up here alone with him."

"It means money, and he regards us as subjects, not as women." Renée looked at her amused, and a little skeptical.

"Wait till you have known him another month. These men are clever, and they know whom they are dealing with. To be wholly absorbed in his art—such a state of mind does not exist, certainly not for a Frenchman."

She began to adjust her hat. "I am

going now. If he wants me for a portrait, he can send for me. You are so steady and sensible. Few women could do what you are doing. I want to run away." Renée laughed softly.

Larue, entering the room, went to his easel without a word. Before Madame Karl could make an effective exit, there came a clatter of light feet and the rustle of skirts, and, radiant from the keen morning air, in a perfectly fitting black dress, very *chic* and plain, which showed her perfect figure, Mademoiselle Odette entered.

Her gay, natural greeting, her rich color and sparkle, seemed to illumine the room. She ran up to the painter, who had only turned his head at her entrance, and took both his hands. "*Bonjour, mesdames. Bonjour, cher monsieur.* Here I am; I have not disappointed you. And I have come in time to prepare your luncheon."

It was just twelve o'clock. The painter looked up uncertainly. Madame Karl nodded to Renée, and with a bow went toward the stairs. Renée exclaimed, "Don't go yet; nothing is decided," and Larue, looking vaguely after her, seemed held in the thrall of some great idea and unable to speak.

It was Odette who really grasped the situation, exclaiming, "I have disturbed you all. Wait, madame, Larue wished to speak to you. *Moi, je vais à la cuisine.*" She smiled at Renée, but still lingered on the stairs.

Larue, roused at last, slowly regathered his scattered wits. Throwing down his brush, he drew a low stool to the middle of the room and sat down, looked from one to the other, and dropping his head in his hands, exclaimed despairingly, "*C'est l'embarras de choix! J'ai des idées embrouillées! Asseyez-vous toutes; je voudrais réfléchir.*"

Odette, smiling, and at once comprehending his mood, sat down where she was, on the lowest step of the stair, motioning with the air of hostess and stage-manager at once to Madame Karl, who, arrested in her flight, leaned against the balustrade. She, too, understood the artist's mood, and Renée,

leaning forward on one elbow, in her Egyptian dress, waited with breathless interest for the situation to unfold.

"I must have you each on separate canvases, as I planned," he said at last, "but since I see you together, three types so different, *mon Dieu*, I must also have you together. *C'est vous, mademoiselle,*" he turned fiercely on Odette, "who have complicated and upset my plans, by arriving when I did not expect you."

"But I had promised to come."

"Ah, but when do you ever keep a promise?"

He got up and walked about more calmly. The idea began to shape itself. "I have it now. I shall put you all together, with some shadowy, mysterious background—you are waiting for something. There are other figures, perhaps, but minor ones. The subject might be 'The Seasons,' but no! I shall make it something more symbolic—three different types of womanhood. You," to Odette, "will be laughing, with a child. You will be the centre of the picture."

She flushed scarlet with pleasure.

"You," to Madame Karl, "will be elusive, vanishing, looking back, a drapery fluttering, and so on."

"You," to Renée, "that is more difficult; it is the dark, mysterious note of the picture, the struggle between the other two types. It will be good, a large picture, yes, a fine thing."

Again oblivious of their existence, he went to a small littered table in the corner and began to sketch. Odette, knowing his way, smiled to the others, and disappeared mysteriously into the room above. Madame Karl, carried along despite of herself in the current of life she knew so well, dropped her furs again and sat down, idly looking over a box of engravings; while Renée drew an old fur cape about her, and got up to stretch her cramped limbs.

Larue came toward them at last, calm and once more alive to practical things. "You will both come, then, tomorrow? I will make a beginning with the three

figures." He expected no demur, but Renée was surprised at Madame Karl's sudden acquiescence.

Then, the momentous thing arranged, he pulled out his watch. "I have kept you too late; I regret it very much. At least I can offer you a cup of coffee if you will wait. Mademoiselle Odette!" he called, "*mais qu'est-ce que nous allons faire?*"

"You mean that you are all hungry?" came a voice from the distant kitchen. "Come and see what I have done—a little surprise for you!"

When they trooped into the small dining-room, they found a table neatly laid for three, and a chubby little girl of eight, whom Odette proudly introduced as "*ma petite sœur*," arranging radishes, fresh bread and cheese, which she had been sent out to purchase. At the door of the cuisine appeared Odette, eyes sparkling like a good fairy, her black skirt turned up and pinned back, showing her slender ankles and neat, high-heeled boots that clumped delightfully about, while she bore a smoking platter of eggs served with a marvelous sauce, "for which," she explained, "*je suis célèbre*."

"But *your* place!" exclaimed Renée to her, as they gathered around the little table, Larue suddenly transformed into a pleased and attentive host.

"Oh, I shall eat later with little Marie; it is for you ladies to eat now with monsieur," she returned, showing her white teeth in an irresistible smile.

That the "ladies" were of a different world than hers she felt instinctively, and accepted as naturally as she accepted many other limitations and strange conditions of the groove she had been born in.

"*Elle est gentille, n'est-ce pas?*" said Larue to his two guests who were calling to the pretty cuisinière; and went to the kitchen and said gently, "*Embrasse-moi, Odette!*" and she put the most friendly of kisses on his cheek.

"*Moi aussi, monsieur!*" Marie begged, and laughing he lifted her to his knee, as he sat down, and then made Odette bring a stool and sit beside him, and merrily the five lunched together.

It was a pretty sight afterward to see Odette, this girl of the studios, who seemed with her affection and womanly charm to cast a spell over them all, bending her trim figure over the dish-washing, arms bare to the elbow, and her glorious crown of hair loosened and glowing like an aureole, while little Marie proudly aided her.

This lunch was not the last, although subsequent ones were less elaborately prepared, in view of the long, absorbing hours spent over the new picture. It grew rapidly under the painter's hands and seemed adequate to his great idea, for he worked ferociously, even at night by lamplight on the minor details, in order to have it ready for the Salon. Madame Karl's vagueness, her false pride and hesitancy, had all been overcome; and (feeling perhaps safe under Renée's protection) she threw herself into the interest of the undertaking, as the painter worked now on one figure, now on the other.

As the picture neared completion, Herr Brandt, who was a little jealous of the whole venture, and who was not working for the Salon exposition, asked to be allowed to see it.

The sittings had been prolonged all the afternoon, and just as it was becoming too dark to paint longer he arrived, much impressed by the scene and by the picture, jealous perhaps of the mystic, poetic portrayal of Madame Karl on the Frenchman's canvas, but more jealous—as she knew by the compression of his lips—of the other man's power and phenomenal capacity for work. Even as they talked Larue was continuing his quick, telling strokes.

Since the painter, after his greeting of Brandt, worked on silently, Odette lit the candles and brought tea in. Then, chairs being scarce, she sat on the floor at the feet of Madame Karl, who was whispering to Renée, "Brandt is jealous—it will do him good. He needs to be stung to some effort." Brandt, lighting a cigarette and trying to look bored, was nevertheless devouring Odette with his eyes, as she sat at the foot of one of the tall candle-

sticks, in the long folds of the white dress she had not had time to change.

Presently he began to talk to her, and they were soon deep in animated discussion and banter; and Madame Karl, who was really indifferent to his fancies, talked in an undertone to Renée, until suddenly Larue called her to him. There was some turn of her head he wished to study, and with one of her flashes of insight into his idea, she began to criticize his lines and lights, and presently they, too, were absorbed, he talking and listening as he rarely did, held for the moment under her spell, and evoking the best in her.

Renée, leaning back on the divan in a dark corner near the stairs, gazed thoughtfully at the scene; the great, shadowy room where the lamp Larue had placed near his work made the only bright spot, and shadows lay around and above save for the dim circle of light wherein sat Odette and Brandt, beings of the same world, irresponsible and unreflecting.

"You will pose for me always—I must have you for all my pictures, to suggest, to inspire me, to give me a change of idea," said Larue gesticulating. Renée, feeling utterly detached, a spectator only, as she had felt so often in life, leaned back watching them all through the gloom, and, as in certain moments when alone, her disappointment and her unfulfilled hopes came over her afresh.

Suddenly there came a light step on the stair, and there appeared Odette's little sister, who had been waiting in the kitchen, and behind her a huge blond man, with the head of a Viking. Renée, leaning forward till her own face was in the light, drew back hastily, so strangely like he was to the man who had once filled her life! The stranger had seen her. He put little Marie aside, and with a gesture for silence came noiselessly down the stairs and took a seat on the divan. "*La voilà!*" he said, pointing to Odette. "Well, I shall be happy here for a while." Renée surveyed the sculptor, as the candle-light cast strange, flickering lights about his

fair head, while he in turn tried to scan her face.

"You showed yourself only in one flash of light, mademoiselle," he said, "but you see I am not afraid of you."

With cool deliberation he took a cigarette out of his pocket, and while pretending to light it held the match aloft till it flickered out and burnt his fingers.

"Pardon me, but I have heard much of you, and all true—the classic forehead and nose—well, don't let us talk art any more. You must have had enough for one day, and so have I. But Odette has told me of your wonderful type. Some day, perhaps, you will let me make a modeling. My studio is in an old, disused theatre, with all the empty boxes and seats for audience. When I am alone, I sing." He squared his huge chest. "My voice is strong, tremendous, not beautiful or trained, of course."

"Why not sing now?"

"We should disturb them—and it is such a charming group." He made a laughing gesture toward the others and leaned nearer. "Let us talk until they find us."

No longer a spectator, Renée soon forgot everything in his conversation. He was so like her old friend Gresham, yet so strangely unlike, that she found herself watching him in semi-fascination, a fact that did not escape him. She half resented his easy intimacy and masterfulness, but it was impossible not to feel his charm. And why not let herself be wholly carried away by his recklessness and gaiety? His open admiration aroused her, and his huge strength appealed to her sense of weariness. And suddenly the full fascination and temptation of this new life, this free atmosphere, rushed upon her. As for Odette, pretty, drifting, unthinking creature, was she worth considering?

Perhaps the well-poised side of her nature that Madame Karl leaned on was weakening, as she allowed her mind to fill with new, enticing dreams. But all at once her eyes caught the shimmer of Odette's lovely head thrown

back in laughter, and the sculptor glanced up in surprise at her suddenly indifferent tone.

Night had at last fallen outside, and the huge studio windows gleamed against the blackness. Renée, thinking of her long ride across the river, urged the sculptor again, "Sing, and rouse them up; I must go at once."

He leaned over her. "Are you going home alone? Let us slip away and I will go with you."

"I could not think of such a thing! Unless you sing, I shall call them all over here."

"You are very hard on me," he said, "but perhaps you will not be the next time we meet, in my studio." He tried to see her eyes in the gloom. Renée's breath came fast, but she flung off the hand that had grasped hers.

"I am going!" she exclaimed.

"*Mon Dieu!* I will sing, then."

Into the shadowy room poured his great, rich, untrained voice, the first few notes transfixing them all; then they leaped to their feet, and one and all seized upon the sculptor and brought candles to illumine the shadowy corner where he and Renée waited and laughed.

She fancied that Odette grew pale for an instant, but little Marie, who ran in at the shouting, threw her arms in her glee around her sister and kissed her over and over again.

Then all congratulated Larue on the success of his picture, and the party broke up, with animated handshakings, the towering height of the sculptor dwarfing the other men. Brandt and Madame Karl went off together, and Renée, who had lingered to speak to Larue, was leaving alone, when in the dark of the landing she felt a warm arm slipped about her neck, and Odette's voice in her ear.

"*Chérie*, you will not take him from me? I love him, and he is my great chance! I do want to be his wife, to be good and have dear little children. You see, in my life it is not so easy—I realize it all since I have seen you. It is very different. Now, if you pose for him—"

Words forsook her, and a hot tear fell on Renée's hand; and at this her own tears broke forth. She flung her arms around the beautiful girl, so learned in all the life of the studio, so ignorant of the things she yet yearned for vaguely.

"I shall never see him again, Odette, and he has not really given me a thought. It was at you he kept looking all the time. Believe me, it is true. You will be happy, my dear, and I shall always remember and love you."

At the sculptor's step behind them she fled down the stairs, only turning her head once to make sure that Odette was in his arms.



TOWN AND COUNTRY

By Nixon Waterman

O H, the patter of the rain
On the roof and window pane
(You have never read a poem just like this'n)
Is so sweet a slumber song
That to miss it would be wrong,
So you have to lie awake all night and listen.

Which reminds me that in town
All the noisy noises drown
Every sound so fully that it doesn't matter,
While the country is so still
Sounds all sound so clear and shrill
That it's hard for one to sleep amid the clatter.

HER SIN OF OMISSION

By G. Vere Tyler

THE morning dawned slowly. A pearly mist rolled inward from the blue sea, with its background of vanishing crimson, lingered caressingly on field and tree and flower, then stole silently away. The day from a dream became a reality. The sun shone with gentle effulgence, and the white and scarlet of the flowers were almost audible tones.

All this to the woman lying half-sensuously in a magnificent bed of Roman design, whose tapestries enwrapped her in the splendors of the old world, was a performance behind the scenes. The curtains were drawn, and only the yellow glow of the sun pressing upon them brought to her any knowledge that day had come.

Her eyes traveled about the room, the furnishings of which were arranged to satisfy her comfort and gratify her acutest vanity, in languorous content. She looked deep into the mirrors, reflecting upon them charming reflections. The evening before, she had decorated a marble statue of Psyche with roses. They were wilted, and this gave her a vague satisfaction; there was a vestige of cruelty in their fate that caused her to experience pleasurable pity. Those in the bowls were still fresh, and gave out a delicious fragrance which blended with the perfumes that nightly she sprinkled on the pillows and sleeping garments.

It was delicious to awake thus, and for a moment the woman, who had not been born to wealth, felt the delights of luxury permeating and caressing her. Her life had become the realization of the dreams of her childhood, dreams which she had contemplated with no

sense of realization, but as a child dreams of heaven.

Suddenly a dull pallor spread over her features, a pallor induced by a languid, agonizing memory that far exceeded the bliss of the caressing atmosphere a few moments before.

She arose from her bed and, walking as one in a dream, approached the window, drew aside the curtains, and looked out. Directly below was a luxuriant flower-garden, and above the kaleidoscopic effect some trees lately leaved looked fantastical and airy. Across the field that lay beyond there was a small, stone church with a gilded cross that caught the sun's rays in a blinding declaration of the faith it upheld. A low-toned bell was tolling its message that the doors were open to receive sinners. This was the hour when the priest heard confessions.

She paused a moment. How fair the day was, and this sin that awoke at intervals in her heart, how far away! But in the act of dismissing it, it clutched aggressively at her memory, and with trembling hands she began to dress herself. When she had completed a hurried toilet, she threw a light scarf about her head, and, pausing once more as though to make sure of the reality of her oppression, left the room, descended the stairway, and leaving the house, walked quickly through the flowers, across the field to the church. At the threshold she again paused, but lifting her head with impatient determination she passed up the aisle and approached the confessional. Once there she flung herself, almost violently, upon her knees before the priest.

"Father," she began in a broken voice, and ceased to speak.

"Well, daughter?" asked the priest, absently.

"Father, I have a sin to confess, a sin that has lain in my breast for years—weighing upon me, taking the zest out of every pleasure, making all my joys reproaches—my very luxuries close upon me and suffocate me!"

She spoke with effort, and her voice was a half gasp. "This morning, when I awoke, it attacked me anew—suddenly. I got up and looked out of the window, and when I saw this church and heard the bell, I thought that if I could come here and fall down on my knees, and by making confession be rid of it—" She looked up suddenly. "You see, I have seen you passing many times; I knew your face—often it seemed to me compassionate—a benediction—I—"

"My child," interrupted the priest sternly, "when did you make your last confession?"

The words startled her. "Father, I have never made a confession, but this sin, it has weighed on me so—"

"Daughter," the voice rang out strong and clear, "are you of the Church; are you a Catholic?"

"No, father; I was brought up in the Protestant faith, I—"

"Rise, my daughter," said the priest sternly. "I cannot confess you, but I will talk with you. Wait for me outside."

She arose instantly as though stung by a rebuke, but strengthened by the ring of help in the clear, melodious voice, made her way through the vague-colored light of cathedral glass, down the centre aisle of the church, which appeared to her excited gaze a barren road cut through the pictured agonies of the Savior. Outside the daylight was sparkling and clear. The grass directly in front of her was pale apple-green, the shade irritatingly reminding her of some new hangings in her drawing-room, and in a birch tree, the bark of which was like pearl satin, birds were twittering. Lifting her eyes to the heavens she saw that all trace of the

mist had disappeared, and she felt ravished and exalted beneath the sweet, blond sky above her head, that was like faint blue enamel. Impulsively she crossed her hands upon her breast and stood looking upward.

Presently the rustling of the priest's robes at her back startled her. With a quick movement she dropped her hands, and turning, faced him. Momentary astonishment at her almost wondrous beauty crossed the priest's face, but a slight pressure of the lips restored the countenance to its sublime calm. He was a powerfully built man, strong in physique and character, the kind of character that weaves itself into a man's muscle like a network of steel. The face was not holy, but controlled; looking into it was like looking into a vanishing storm so far distant that the glory and majesty are experienced without fear. She looked upon him, and thought of a great, silent organ capable of bursting into rhapsodic music, but that was nevertheless destined to be dumb.

"I live there," she said, pointing to the house, and without a word stepped into the narrow path that lay before them.

The priest followed her in silence. At the gate she paused, and glanced up nervously at the placid face, but he merely stepped aside and opened it for her. Then they walked on as before, she ahead of him, through the broad path hedged with flowers, above which the trees, in the stronger sunlight, looked even more ethereal.

Entering the house, she walked quickly through the hall, opened the drawing-room door, and held it for him. For an instant the priest was impressed by the surroundings that greeted him, as he had been in the dazzling sunlight by the beauty of her face. With a quick glance he took in the green hangings, the pale tint of the rose velvet carpet, the numerous palms and passionless water-colors that lined the walls. The room itself was a water-color, the rare effects of which had been produced by an ardent but spiritual instinct. The woman, the foremost fig-

ure, suggested Bartelozzi's creations, a being created to lie amid verdure amused by cupids, but it was easy to see that she was as unconscious of herself as she was of her surroundings. The smoldering, eager look of her eyes told him this.

"Father," she burst forth, "that which I have to confess to you is an old story! It is this: I sacrificed filial duty when it conflicted with inclination. I allowed those dear to me to suffer pangs of poverty by refusing to consent to a marriage that they, and all our world, approved of, and that would have brought to them relief. Is it not a grievous sin, father, to have permitted one's own flesh and blood to suffer, when by simple acquiescence to conventional practices I could have saved them? Should I not have ignored my preferences and forgotten self? That is what I have to confess, father."

The priest smiled. "And is that all, my child?"

"All! Is it not enough? I was guilty of that gigantic selfishness! I refused to do that which would have saved my adored ones from suffering and want! Is it not enough? I think so—I feel that I was guilty of a great sin, and it has weighed on me for years! Father, should I not have forgotten self?"

"And destroyed the value of that self," said the priest quietly, "as a part of God's perfect plan."

She laughed a bit hysterically, and threw up her hands. "I! What am I in God's plan?"

"The tiniest flower, my child, is a part of the universal plan; and, besides, had you made your sacrifice, you would ever after have cheated your way through the world. This secret act of yours, performed for the sake of the material comfort of others, the perishable, would have been an interference with the perfection of your eternal spirit. There are sins which the world in its blindness overlooks, that to God are eternal blights, just as a flawed diamond may pass as perfect in a crowded ballroom but be instantly condemned by the valuer."

The voice of the priest, with its slow, lingering cadence, ceased. The atmosphere, charged with the magnetism of the great man, appeared to vibrate. For a few moments they sat in silence, the priest looking beyond him apparently into the great unknown, but in reality thinking of her, of that which in her splendid beauty she embodied as man's perpetual temptation—of all women such as she, beautiful, fragrant, ingenuous, unconscious of their purpose, which was in reality obedience to nature's manifestations through them, but that the social conditions of the world of necessity limit, if not check. He wondered if any act of woman, however exalted in the eyes of the beholder or herself, was free from the feminine propensity to attract the opposite sex. But why tell her—why try to enlighten her? As well tell the poppy of the narcotic poison it contained. Suddenly he turned to her.

"How long have you been contemplating seeking my advice?"

Her face colored. "Father!" she stammered, "I—"

The priest raised his finger and looked severely at her.

"Are you quite certain, my daughter," he asked, "that you were prompted solely by spiritual considerations in seeking me while in the performance of my pastoral duties?"

Her flush deepened as she met his scrutinizing gaze. "Do you think I was insincere?" she flashed.

"You knew that not being of the Church I could not confess you," the priest said, calmly.

"Possibly. But it was of my sin I was thinking, my selfishness, my wrong to others!"

"And you wanted sympathy?"

She was silent, but tears of vexation swam in her eyes. She was not used to having her motives thus analyzed. The priest saw her tears and read her thoughts.

"My child," he said gently, "my questions contain no reproaches. It is good for us to have our acts analyzed, for it is only in such analyses that we ever know ourselves as we really are."

It is my desire to help, not hurt you. With many of us the conscious self, that which we control, is sincere; I have no doubt yours is; but there is in each one of us the subconscious self which, fortunately or unfortunately, as the case may be, at times dominates us. Its performances, invariably dramatic, deceive us. This subconscious self, with you—partly on account of your imaginative tendencies, partly on account of your mode of existence—is a very dominant one, and creates for itself actions that may pass muster as praiseworthy in the eyes of others as well as your conscious self, but that are in reality cloaks for extremely subtle indulgences of its own. I am perfectly positive that you did not know you were seeking—what shall I say?—adventure, diversion from the beaten track, when you came across the fields this morning to my confessional, knowing that you would be refused its consolation."

"Father, you are very cruel."

"A priest's cruelty, my daughter, is his defense. Did he not analyze the motives of those who come to him for help, he could be blinded by their explanations and of no use to them. I said I could not confess you, but that I would talk to you. Listen to me. In our modern life, with its lack of occupation for woman, there lurk dangers of which she is unconscious, and that, unless she watches herself or is carefully guarded, may, all unconsciously to her, prove her spiritual ruin. These dangers appear in many forms. Ennui drives her to seek forgetfulness of self in frivolous pursuits, and by the devil's hypnotism she is sent hither and thither along seemingly innocent paths in the way of temptation, and thence destruction. Any novelty that attracts, diverts for the moment, she falls an easy prey to. At such times she fancies herself sinner or saint, according to the mood she is in. Take your own case. You awoke this morning half oppressed by the beautiful, even serenity of your existence; your conscience was altogether too tranquil to give zest to the day ahead of you, so your subconscious self awoke to its evil work, which took

the form of representing you to yourself in the form of a sinner. The church, in the early morning light, was pretty in your eyes; the tolling of the bells was sweet in your ears; you had seen me—my face, as you have declared, seemed to you compassionate—you were in need of emotional excitement, you sought it in the place nearest your hand. Do you think I condemn you for this? Not at all; it was perfectly natural. Only a priest knows to what extent a woman's subconscious self can go when she is in need of sympathy. You are probably an innocent woman, possibly of an exalted nature, but there is a part of that nature that requires sharp watching. It is the part that your subconscious self amuses itself with—takes advantage of. Learn to analyze your impulses. What you consider an omission amounting to sin, and that has caused you remorse, is to your credit, and has its reward not only in yourself but in those whom your good or evil acts might affect. The perfecting of a human life depends upon the absolutely accurate balancing of actions and reactions of which the physical are merely manifestations—and from which any breaking away would be the soul's deviation from its purpose."

He rose and lifted above her head one massive, strong, white hand. The gentle rustling of his garments as he moved caused her to tremble, but she controlled herself and raised her large, questioning, serious eyes to him.

"My daughter," he said in a low, quiet voice, "I could not listen to your confession in the church, but I can give you my blessing here."

Outside a bird broke into song, and the sun, having reached one of the windows, came toward her in a shaft of light that enveloped her. The flush receded from her face, and she grew pale as she slipped down on her knees, and bent her head to the uplifted hand, which descended gently and rested on her shining hair.

The blessing was a silent one, and the hand removed so tenderly that she was scarce conscious of it. When she finally

raised her eyes she caught a glimpse of the priest's black robe, as he passed swiftly and silently out of the door.

For quite a while she remained upon her knees, her eyes fixed on the door through which the priest had passed, but finally she rose slowly, and stretching herself full-length on the couch upon which they had been seated, lay with her hands beneath her head, looking up at the shadowy ceiling.

The daily sounds of the seashore town were beginning, and through the open door she could see the maid placing fresh flowers in the hall. The present crept toward her again with caressing touch. The words of the priest lingered soothingly in her ears, and the blessing seemed still descending upon her. Finally she got up and walked out on the broad piazza that faced the sea, and where pink roses were blooming above the green grass in marble vases. The beauty of nature thrilled her, but she was perplexed by a vague sense of sadness and unrest that had taken possession of her. The words of the priest, but partly understood, had almost vanished from her brain, but an impression was left.

Almost as one in a trance she walked over to the edge of the piazza and stood in the radiant, morning light, looking thoughtfully beyond her. The blue sky had deepened in tone, and some gigantic, snow-white clouds had appeared and taken a stationary position. How beautiful the world was! What more had it to give than she had possession of? Then why was life not perfect? The words of the priest began to take form again. She went over all he had said to her as one speaks a prayer. Presently she flushed. Perhaps the priest was right—perhaps her motive in going to him was insincere, and it was he who had drawn her and not her desire for absolution from sin. Why was she so restless? Why such a world of enchantment and such restless people? Why this intermittent longing for that which she herself could not define? Why, she had but to express wishes to have them realized! And her husband!

Had not nature made him in the likeness of the gods?

She paused. No, he was not made in the likeness of gods—the priest was made thus! Her husband was a man—a human, male animal, who held her by good looks, a dominating personality, and by housing her in a bed of roses. A glance of intelligence flashed upon her. She was being stifled by the material, by what she possessed that was material, and by being considered from a material standpoint. Small wonder that she revolted. The life she was leading was crushing out her brain and her soul. The priest had recognized this. What a brain *he* had, clear reasoning, a brain that penetrated her acts, saw through her, estimated her and passed judgment on her. Ah! it was all too true; she had been drawn to him! Had she not been sitting at the window for weeks watching for him to pass? Had not his face, impassive yet tender, haunted her? He was correct: his personality had called to her—his personality that was to her the embodiment of the spiritual, the Godlike!

Tears gathered to her eyes and rolled in broad streams down her cheeks. The sound of an approaching motor-car came down the street, and the rumbling noise made her shiver. How tired she was of motor-cars and motor-veils and tearing about. Suddenly she was oppressed, overcome and suffocated by the terrible loneliness of her inner self that the priest had told her of—that part of her that required watching. She began to sob a bit, and walked over to a column of the piazza, pressed her arms against it, and buried her face in them.

"He was right," she said; "I do need watching. That part of me that my husband doesn't believe in is hungry!"

"Madame, monsieur is here!"

She turned quickly, brushing the corners of her eyes with the back of her hand, and saw Annette, in her jaunty cap and ruffled apron, fresh and smiling in the doorway. Behind her, towering head and shoulders above the curly head and little cap, was her husband. At the sight of him her soul, that had been timidly fluttering, flew

away like a frightened bird out of a window. His greeting was boisterous, and when it was over he turned away from her to light a cigarette. She stood behind him in appealing submission, for the sight of his broad shoulders and the glint of gold in his brown hair had sent a tremor through her.

"Serve the coffee here, Annette," she said quietly to the girl.

"And order everything in the house; I'm as hungry as a bear!" cried the man. "We were up at six, and we've come forty miles. We made her hum, I tell you—ran over a couple of chickens! I say, Mona, it's all absurd your being tired of motoring; you've got to go; people are beginning to talk—they say I leave you behind."

"Do they?"

"Oh, I know you don't care, but I do—I don't like gossip; besides, you stand between me and the women—they're a nuisance. You know I only care for you."

She paled. "It's strange, isn't it? But you are right—I am tired of it all, but I'll go; it's dangerous to leave me

alone—" she went up to him—"there's a part of me that—that needs watching."

He roared. "Watching! You! I'd as soon think of watching Powers's statue of the Greek slave. When did you get that pink thing? It's pretty. I haven't seen you in it before!"

He lifted her face in his hands, bent down and pressed a very long kiss on her lips. At the sight of a big vein, that swelled in his brow, she trembled again.

"*Maintenant, monsieur, tout de suite!*" said Annette, who had completed the setting of the table and was placing upon it a blue vase filled with scarlet flowers.

As she vanished, they seated themselves at the table. Above their heads, at an open window, a canary bird was singing, and the fragrant aroma of the coffee reached them. The man was talking; the woman's eyes were fixed on a little field that lay on the other side of the house. In a narrow path a priest with bowed head was waiking. She saw him enter the church.



THE LAND OF DREAMS

By Henry M. Hoyt, Jr.

AH, give us back our dear dead Land of Dreams!
 The far, faint, misty hills—the tangled maze
 Of brake and thicket—down green woodland ways
 The hush of summer—and on amber streams,
 Bright leaves afloat, amid the foam that creams
 Round crannied boulders, where the shallows blaze.
 Then life ran joyous through glad, golden days,
 And silver nights beneath the moon's pale beams.

Now all is lost. There glooms a dark morass,
 Where throbbed the thrush across the dappled lawn.
 Oh, never more shall fairy pageants pass,
 Nor dance of light-limbed satyr, nymph and faun,
 Adrift among the whispering meadow-grass,
 On wind-swept uplands, yearning toward the dawn.

THE WOMAN AND THE GIRL

By Gregory North

PITTSBURG was at its murkiest. A drizzling rain impartially sprinkled the unfortunate pedestrians with a mixture of soot and water.

A cab drew up at the Union depot.

A woman alighted, cast a hasty glance around and entered the waiting-room. There she stopped as if undecided.

Again she glanced around critically; then, seeking the most secluded nook, she seated herself, took from her handbag a note which she had received just as she was leaving her home, and read:

MY DARLING:

I shall be at the appointed place as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements.

I may be late. We may be unable to catch the express we intended to take; but wait there for me. There is another express at 3:15. We shall take that if we cannot make the other. That will only mean an hour later. I shall explain everything when I come.

G. M. O.

The woman shuddered as she replaced the letter and glanced out at the dismal streets.

"God has shown his disfavor by giving us this kind of a day," she murmured.

Then she laughed softly, a self-deprecatory laugh. "I guess God had nothing to do with it," she mused bitterly.

"Too late to retreat now," she added firmly, and settled herself as though for a long wait.

A clear, merry laugh startled her out of a deep reverie.

She glanced quickly in the direction from which the laugh had come.

A small, red-headed girl, somewhere between fourteen and sixteen years of age, was seated opposite, deeply interested in a magazine.

Evidently she found the article she was reading amusing. Every now and then she would burst into irrepressible laughter; thrilling, liquid laughter that brought a smile to many of the weary faces.

These little outbursts lasted until she had finished the article; then she dropped the magazine into her lap, threw back her ruddy head and laughed whole-heartedly but softly for several minutes.

Behind her veil, the woman smiled, forgetful of all bitterness.

She watched the girl closely.

Memory suddenly took her back to the time when she was just such a freckle-faced girl.

Her mind became thronged with the red-letter days of childhood. There was the day when Paul Reading filled her with dismay by calling her "Freckle-faced Reddy" right before the other boys.

She could see herself as she stood facing him—her little fists clenched; her face devoid of all color save the ugly brown dots; and her heart seething with a child's limitless fury.

After this came the day in which they "made up"; the day he brought her the first birthday gift; the day he brought her the first bunch of flowers—wild violets; and the later days when wild violets were again substituted for hot-house flowers.

Happy days, each one of them! Full of thrills of nameless expectancy.

Finally came the days of courtship, and, last of all, the marriage day.

She glanced impatiently out of the window.

She had grown strangely pale.

She felt a sickening longing that could not be satisfied, a longing to go back to these old girlhood days, and live again the same happy dreams and possess the same high ideals.

Actuated by a sudden impulse, she took a seat by the girl, who, not noticing the change, kept on reading for several minutes. Finally she closed the magazine with every mark of impatience.

"Horrid old thing," she exclaimed, half aloud.

The woman smiled sympathetically.

The girl blushed and smiled back.

"Some character did not suit you?" questioned the woman.

"I should think not," the girl answered. Then both laughed at her earnestness.

"What was it about?" the woman asked, showing keen interest.

"It was about a woman who married a man when she and he were quite young.

"They loved each other at first. The man worked and worked to become rich for her sake; and she grew into a beautiful woman.

"She studied and grew cultured and admired, while he became round-shouldered and careworn.

"Finally they were very wealthy, and he was so proud of her, and tried to understand the things she loved; and tried to be everything she would be proud of. But he couldn't straighten his shoulders, nor throw aside the marks of hard toil.

"Other men came into her life—straight, tall, cultured men; men from good, old families; men who looked, outwardly, to be noblemen. He was but a nobleman at heart.

"Gradually she grew ashamed of him, comparing him with these other men.

"There was one whom she especially favored. How tall he was! How straight! How gracious! How nobly he carried his head!

"He admired her also; and one

night they agreed to run away together.

"He was wealthy, too, and they intended to go where no one would know them and to live happily ever after."

A scarlet blush spread over the girl's face as she said, "Now, don't you think she was horrid?"

"But if she loved the man?" The woman blushed to put such a question to a girl.

The girl's eyes grew large with surprise.

"Love? It couldn't be love," she said. "It was nothing but mean vanity and wickedness."

The woman rose hurriedly, threw back her veil, stooped and kissed the girl.

"Good-bye, little girl," she said; "not all stories in real life have a sad ending. Sometimes an angel steps in and prevents it."

She gave a swift, tender touch to the girl's shoulder and left her wondering.

As the woman stepped out of the waiting-room, she brushed past a handsome, aristocratic man who glanced curiously after her.

"I would take my oath that that was Angeline, if it were not for the stoop of the shoulders," he muttered.

As soon as the woman had turned the corner the stoop vanished.

She raised her hand impatiently and tore off her veil.

"It suffocates me," she said.

Hailing a cab, she gave an address on a fashionable avenue.

Arriving at the place, she alighted and almost ran into the arms of a man whose shoulders were bent, but whose face glowed with love.

"I missed you today, Angeline," he said, smiling sadly.

What day had he not missed her? But it seemed to him that she had been away longer than usual this time.

A shiver ran through her as she embraced him more fondly.

"You will never miss me long again," she answered.



LA DAME DE CŒUR

Par Arthur Bernède

PERSONNAGES

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY, 36 ans.

LE BARON DE LIVRY, 40 ans.

LE DOCTEUR REMY, 43 ans.

RITU, reporter du *Coq Français*, 31 ans.

LISBETH, femme de chambre, 20 ans.

Chez la baronne. Dans un petit salon révélant à lui seul la fortune de ses propriétaires : deux ou trois cent mille francs de rente.

Le docteur Remy, qui ressemble beaucoup plus à un élégant cercleux qu'à un disciple d'Esculape, a étalé sur une table qui, paraît-il, aurait appartenu à Mme. de Sévigné, toutes sortes d'appareils de chirurgie... à côté : des bandes de toile, de coton hydrophile, de la gaze iodoformée. Lisbeth, la femme de chambre, jolie fille saine comme un beau fruit savoureux poussé en pleine terre, est là debout devant le praticien, semblant offrir sa carnation splendide à quelque vague essai d'opération inédite. La baronne de Livry suit attentivement des yeux le professeur Remy qui prend le bras de Lisbeth et lui fait faire quelques mouvements de flexion.

L E PROFESSEUR REMY.—Vous avez bien compris, baronne. Et vous vous sentez capable de diagnostiquer une fracture.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Parfaitement, mon cher maître.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Je suppose donc que vous soyez sur une grande route, privée de tout secours immédiat, et que vous vous trouviez en face d'un malheureux, d'une malheureuse, qui vient de se casser le bras. Comment vous y prendriez-vous pour faire un pansement provisoire ?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Voulez-vous que j'essaye sur le bras de Lisbeth ?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Parfaitement.

La baronne de Livry, maladroitement

s'efforce de faire le pansement provisoire que depuis plus d'un mois le professeur Remy s'efforce de lui apprendre. Au bout d'une demi-heure de tâtonnements et d'hésitations, la baronne est arrivée à transformer le bras de sa femme de chambre en une sorte de poupon au maillot. Si la pauvre Lisbeth avait eu vraiment le bras cassé, il y avait de quoi lui faire pousser des hurlements capables de rendre sourde une demoiselle du téléphone.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY, *triomphante*.—C'est bien cela, n'est-ce pas, cher maître ?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Non, pas tout à fait encore. Mais il y a du mieux... beaucoup de mieux ! Encore trois ou quatre leçons, et vous serez capable de rendre des points à mes internes.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Vous pouvez vous retirer, Lisbeth : cela suffit. (*La femme de chambre s'en va.*) Et cela ne vous ennuie pas trop, mon cher et grand professeur, de venir chaque jour m'enseigner l'art de venir en aide à ses semblables ?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY, *pensant que chaque leçon lui rapporte cinq louis*.—Mais, madame, je viendrai tant que cela sera nécessaire.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Comme vous êtes gentil !

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Et je suis très fier de vous.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Vraiment !

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Et sincèrement je vous admire.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Ce que je fais est pourtant bien simple, bien naturel.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Bien rares sont les femmes de votre rang qui consentent, non seulement à faire la charité avec leur argent, mais à payer de leur personne.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Je suis bonne... par tempérament. Je n'ai aucun mérite.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Ce matin, j'ai lu dans le *Coq Français* que vous aviez encore envoyé mille francs pour les pauvres pêcheurs bretons.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Ces journalistes sont d'une indiscretion... J'avais pourtant bien recommandé au directeur du *Coq* de ne mettre, sur sa liste, que mes initiales, ou même simplement "Don anonyme."

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Non seulement il ne l'a pas fait... mais il a même placé avant vous la marquise de Zuy-d'Ersée qui, cependant, n'avait envoyé que cinq cents francs.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Comment, madame de Zuy-d'Ersée n'avait envoyé que vingt-cinq louis!

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Oui, et la comtesse d'Armail... deux cents francs.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Et les Zeimernuyen?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Deux mille!

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Que c'est ennuyeux d'être éclipsée par des Juifs! Et les de Bricourt?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Une misère... cinq louis!

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Cinq louis seulement! On m'avait dit qu'il étaient très pannés en ce moment. J'en suis enchantée. Quand on pense que voilà des gens qui ont passé leur vie à vouloir éblouir tous les autres. Quand j'envoyais une somme à une souscription quelconque, j'étais sûre que le lendemain ils envoyaient le double. S'ils sont ruinés, c'est bien fait!... Personne ne les plaindra.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Viendrez-vous demain à ma clinique?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Certainement.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—De là, si vous le voulez bien, nous irons faire un tour aux Enfants Assistés.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—C'est cela, je leur porterai des joujoux, des bonbons...

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Nous éviterons d'aller dans les salles où il y a du danger de contagion.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Cela ne me fait pas peur. Notre devoir, à nous qui comprenons la charité, n'est-il pas d'aller partout...

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Décidément, vous êtes sublime. Et dans le rapport que je dois lire à la prochaine assemblée générale de cette œuvre admirable des *Dames secourables*, dont vous êtes la dévouée présidente, vous me permettrez de citer ces nobles paroles.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Non, non... je ne veux pas... je suis modeste. Je...

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Mais si... Cela est nécessaire pour stimuler certains zèles... Nous ferons tirer ce rapport à plusieurs milliers d'exemplaires, nous l'enverrons un peu partout.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Alors... si c'est pour une œuvre de propagation, j'y consens.

Un valet de pied vient apporter à la baronne une carte sur un plateau d'argent.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Le reporter du *Coq français*! Ah! il arrive bien celui-là. Faites entrer. Je vais leur en donner une petite leçon de savoir-vivre... à lui et à son directeur!... Au fait, mon cher maître, j'avais oublié de vous dire que depuis quelques jours mon petit garçon est un peu souffrant. Il se plaint de maux de tête...

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Voulez-vous que je le voie?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Est-ce bien utile? Les enfants... ça se plaint pour un rien. Je serais désolée de vous déranger!

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Oh! J'en ai pour deux minutes...

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Comme vous êtes aimable! On va vous conduire jusqu'à la chambre du petit Jacques.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Il est couché?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Ce matin, il a refusé obstinément de se lever... Des grimaces! S'il ment, je vous serai reconnaissante de le tancer d'importance. A tout à l'heure, cher maître.

Le professeur Remy sort au moment où le reporter du *Coq français* fait son entrée.

LE REPORTER, saluant.—Baronne!

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Je ne suis pas fâchée de vous voir, monsieur!

LE REPORTER.—Très flatté. Sans doute quelque communication intéressante sur l'une de vos belles œuvres?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY, *sèchement*.—Non, monsieur. Je vous prierai simplement d'annoncer à votre directeur que je ne renouvellerai pas mon abonnement.

LE REPORTER.—Oh! madame! Et peut on, sans être indiscret, vous demander les motifs d'une aussi grave détermination?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Le manque d'égards que chez vous l'on affecte à mon endroit.

LE REPORTER.—Oh! baronne, soyez assurée qu'au contraire...

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—C'est pour cela que, moi, qui vous ai encore envoyé mille francs pour vos pêcheurs bretons, vous me reléguez après des gens qui se contentent de vous adresser vingt-cinq louis!

LE REPORTER.—C'est un oubli, une erreur que nous nous empresserons de réparer dès que l'occasion s'en présentera.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—En tout cas, l'effet moral est produit, et vous conviendrez qu'il est déplorable. Votre directeur s'est moqué de moi!

LE REPORTER.—Je vous assure, baronne, que vous vous trompez. La preuve, c'est que notre directeur, enthousiasmé de votre charité inépuisable, m'avait envoyé vous demander une interview sur votre œuvre, les *Dames secourables*.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Je refuse.

LE REPORTER.—Elle passerait en première page.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Peu m'importe!

LE REPORTER.—Avec votre portrait.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—N'insistez pas.

LE REPORTER.—Nous espérons bien devancer ainsi notre confrère *Le Beaumarchais*, qui doit publier prochainement un grand article sur l'œuvre des *Femmes de devoir*.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—L'œuvre rivale que dirige cette arriviste de mar-

quise d'Estérel! Alors je n'hésite plus, je vais vous donner cette interview.

LE REPORTER, *préparant son carnet et son crayon*.—Oh! baronne. Mille grâces.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Mais, si j'y consens, c'est uniquement dans l'intérêt de notre œuvre, pour les pauvres que nous secourons. Mais je mets une condition à tout cela.

LE REPORTER.—Laquelle?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—C'est que vous parlerez de moi le moins possible.

LE REPORTER.—Ca, je ne promets rien.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Je l'exige! Je suis une modeste. J'ai horreur de tout ce qui peut passer pour une réclame. Jamais je ne parle de moi. Je commence donc: je donne environ à l'œuvre, sur mes revenus personnels, une vingtaine de mille francs par an.

LE REPORTER.—C'est magnifique.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Vous pouvez même aller jusqu'à trente mille.

LE REPORTER.—Si nous mettions cinquante mille, cela ferait un chiffre rond.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Soit. Mettons cinquante mille. Je visite au moins deux mille cinq cents malades ou miséreux par an. Je ne crains pas de me rendre dans les quartiers les plus excentriques, de grimper jusqu'au sixième de maisons suintant la misère, de pénétrer dans des galetas sordides.

LE REPORTER.—Vous êtes un ange de charité.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Mais, je vous avouerai que je me sens surtout attirée vers ces pauvres petits êtres...

LE REPORTER.—Oui, votre cœur de mère.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Je ne puis pas voir un enfant pleurer!

A ce moment le professeur Remy rentre au salon.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Baronne, je vous demande pardon de vous déranger, mais...

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Qu'y a-t-il donc?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Votre petit Jacques...

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Se porte comme un charme.

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Mais non, au contraire.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Voulez-vous me permettre de terminer avec monsieur?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—C'est que...

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY, *se tournant vers le reporter*.—Je vous disais donc...

LE REPORTER.—Que vous vous sentiez surtout attirée par les enfants.

LE BARON DE LIVRY, *très pâle, entrant brusquement*.—Comment, docteur Remy, vous n'avez donc pas prévenu la baronne?

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Ah ça! qu'y a-t-il? On ne peut donc pas être tranquille cinq minutes.

LE BARON DE LIVRY.—Il y a, madame, que notre enfant se meurt!

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Vous dites?... Voyons, c'est impossible! Mon cher maître, rassurez-moi!

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Je le voudrais, baronne, mais je suis obligé de vous dire la vérité. Votre petit Jacques est sérieusement atteint.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Une fluxion de poitrine?

LE PROFESSEUR REMY.—Non, une méningite!

LE REPORTER, *se retirant*.—Madame, je reviendrai une autre fois. D'ailleurs, avec les notes que j'ai déjà, j'ai de quoi faire un très bel article. Messieurs!

Il sort.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY, *éclatant en sanglots*.—Docteur! Docteur! Vous sauvez mon petit Jacques?

LE BARON DE LIVRY, *à sa femme*.—Je n'aurai pas la cruauté de vous adresser aucun reproche... Allons tous deux nous installer au chevet de notre pauvre enfant.

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Dieu n'aura pas la cruauté de me le reprendre... J'ai tant fait de bien sur la terre.

LE BARON DE LIVRY.—Il fallait penser un peu moins aux enfants des autres, et un peu plus aux nôtres. Malheureusement, le dévouement maternel ne se raconte pas!

LA BARONNE DE LIVRY.—Si Jacques est sauvé, je donnerai cent mille francs à l'OEuvre des Dames secourables!

LE BARON DE LIVRY.—Ah! si vous voulez que là-haut on vous écoute, n'envoyez pas de notes aux journaux!



CUPID'S AIM

By Claire M. Carberry

TOM loves winsome Daisy,
And Daisy favors Will;
Will makes eyes at Maizie,
While Maizie pines for Phil;
Philip smiles at Dolly,
And Dolly longs for Ted;
Ted loves only Polly,
And Polly lives for Ned.

Thus the lovers stupid
Sorrowing are fixed,
When young Mr. Cupid
Gets his arrows mixed.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF SAM

By Elizabeth Walling

SUZANNE was a chorus girl who believed nothing but opportunity was lacking to make her a star. In this she was remarkable solely because she was right. Yet she stood in the third row of the chorus and repeated the words of the soloist with a joyous emphasis she was far from feeling. Her attempt to get a small speaking part—that of a page in a yellow wig and sky-blue tights—as an opening wedge to better things met with a disconcerting response.

"My dear," said the manager conclusively, "you are here to sing, not to show your legs."

Sam, Suzanne's husband, who was a gas-man at the theatre, grinned appreciatively when she repeated this insult, and the angry tears sprang to her eyes.

"Don't get a grouch on, kid," he said kindly. "Of course you're not that sort, but blamed if I don't think you're the only one of the whole push that isn't, and how could the old man tell?"

"I could play the Princess Bonita a thousand times better than Miss Malvern. Of course my voice doesn't compare with hers, but I can act. She's a stick—stiff, awkward, self-conscious—"

"Oh, now—now—" protested Sam.

"I don't care; she is! Take the scene where her child is lost, and she is supposed to be frantic—I saw her pulling out the lace ruffle on her sleeve in that scene. Good heavens! If little Sam was lost, would I pull out lace ruffles? Could wild horses hold me back from rushing out after him?"

Sam was constrained to answer in the negative. He remembered a time when little Sam had been mislaid for a few minutes, and Suzanne's unreasoning terror and anguish on that occasion.

"But, kid," he protested reasonably, "in a play you got to do what the part says. You can't go off at half cock—"

"You can act as if you could—as if nothing could stop you! She ought to grab up her train like this, and pin it up, her hands shaking so it falls right down again without her knowing it, and grab her lace scarf, and fling it any old way round her head, when she says, 'See, I am calm, self-controlled, protected from the storm. Now let me go! Oh, for pity's sake, if you have a heart, let me go!'"

Sam stared in open-mouthed amazement. A queer thrill ran down his spine.

"Shucks! I didn't know you had it in you like that, kid. Shucks!"

Suzanne laughed. "I've got it in me all right," she said briefly.

After that Sam reflected long and deeply. "It's a blamed shame the kid can't get a show," he thought. "Miss Malvern's all right, but she don't run in the same class with Suzanne, and that's a fact. It's up to me to get her a chance."

It had been up to Sam to get a great many things for Suzanne, beginning in the days of her little girlhood when he had boarded with her widowed mother and supported the family. He had got her her first wax-doll and the little squirrel furs that were the pride of her heart; he had paid for her singing and dancing lessons; and finally he had got her the coveted place in the chorus at the theatre where he was employed. If it is more blessed to give than receive, Sam was greatly blessed, for he gave all he had to give, including his good, honest heart, to Suzanne. As for receiving—well, Sam received the

"kid's" childish gratitude for gifts which would otherwise never have been hers. In time she naturally grew to take things for granted. Not that she wasn't very fond of Sam—she would have been furious with anyone who had ventured to hint such a thing or to speak slightly of him. When her mother died, confiding her to his care, Sam, with a worldly wisdom that was scarcely characteristic, had seen that the only way he could keep the girl under his protection was to marry her.

"Maybe it isn't fair to the kid," reflected Sam. "But, blamed if I know what else to do."

"Fair!" hotly exclaimed Suzanne, who was then seventeen, when the case was put to her. "I should like to know why not! It's awfully good of you, Sam—that's what it is. And I promise to learn to make better bread and to keep the rooms dusted better. You'll see!"

Neither had reckoned with Suzanne's embryonic dramatic aspirations which, fostered by her association with the theatre, gradually came into full-fledged existence. Meantime there had been a wholly domestic year, in the course of which little Sam was born, and twined strong tendrils of love closely round the hearts of his father and mother. Sam loved the baby dearly; but Suzanne idolized him, and would have braved fire and flood, or given the last drop of blood in her veins, if such had been his sovereign pleasure. Little Sam was a blue-eyed sunbeam of a baby, so good that he was cheerfully permitted to accompany his mother to the theatre, where he was passed round, as if he had been good to eat, and where he slept peacefully through the laughter and chatter of girls making up for the chorus—for Suzanne had by no means attained the luxury of a private dressing-room—and minded not one whit the flaring gas in its netted wire globe and the shrill summons of the call-boy, "Ladies of the chorus called."

Little Sam was two years old when "The Princess Bonita" was put on, and ran one hundred and fifty nights. A child being required in the play, he was pressed into service. His "part"

consisted merely in running across the stage in his little white nightgown. His father started him, and his mother, concealed by the scenery, knelt with outstretched arms to receive him. For dramatic purposes, however, the baby was supposed to run straight from his little bed out into the night and the oncoming storm, and promptly lose himself, to the vociferous despair of his mother, the princess. Even with little Sam's sturdy arms around her neck and his solid little body held tight in her arms, even with the rain-machine working, and the thunder and lightning in the process of manufacture before her eyes, Suzanne used to thrill at the ravings of the Princess Bonita over the lost child. But this was because the child was little Sam, and the bare thought of such a catastrophe was so terrible. The princess in this scene would have rushed in her ball costume out into the night and the crashing tempest, if she had not been forcibly restrained by her lover. Finally, in her extremity, she appeals to high heaven: "Give back my child," she cries, "and I will never see this man again. I swear it! In mercy give back my child!"

Then the child, wrapped in a rubber-coat and none the worse for his adventure, is brought in by a stalwart and realistically dripping policeman. The princess, with a cry of rapture, snatches him to her heart, orders the unlawful lover forever out of her sight, and topples over in a swoon. Suzanne's eyes were seldom dry at this climax—all because the child was little Sam.

It was during the run of "The Princess Bonita" that the thing happened that Sam had dreaded ever since Suzanne's mother died, the thing that had hung over his head like the sword suspended by a hair, and the possibility of which had made him fear it wasn't fair to the "kid" to marry her. Suzanne fell in love. Sam saw it coming, but was powerless to avert it; he could only look on dumbly with miserable, dog-like eyes; he could only take faithful care of the "kid," and obtrude his society upon her as little as possible.

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Miss Malvern's leading man was a matinee idol. In fact, the star, who had no illusions regarding him, was inclined to be jealous of his popularity. He was a model of manly beauty, tall, broad-shouldered, with thick, waving hair and eyes that, when he willed it so, few women could look into unmoved. Too many had looked to their sorrow. He was vain, egotistical, utterly selfish. Just then he was making covert advances to one of the chorus girls, a pretty, motherless child of sixteen, whose doom was sealed. It seemed to poor, foolish Suzanne that she could cheerfully die for the rapture of having those dark, soulful eyes gaze into her own as Miss Malvern had them six nights a week and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, while their owner sang:

"Sun of my day, star of my night."

Sam was not an heroic person outwardly, being short and stout, with a bristling red mustache and red-brown eyes whose only beauty was the kindness that unflinchingly dwelt in them. Moreover, Sam's heyday of youth was over, while the actor's was at its height.

"If I could only get the 'kid' the chance to do a good speaking part," thought Sam wistfully, "it might help to take her mind off of him. It's up to me to do that, if it can be done."

So the gas-man screwed up his courage and approached the manager in his den and also, as it happened, in a very bad humor because of the exasperating and expensive caprices of his star.

"I wish I could chuck the woman out of the theatre, and shut the door in her face," he had muttered resentfully to himself, just before Sam entered the office on his errand.

"Well!" exploded the autocrat, his brows drawn together in a devastating frown. "Who are you and what do you want?"

This wasn't an encouraging beginning.

"I want to speak to you about my wife, Maud Elmore; she is on the bills, sir. She's in the third row of the chorus—"

"Then she belongs there," snapped the other. "When she earns promotion she'll get it, not before. The nerve of these third-rate chorus girls expecting to jump into the front row—!"

"My wife has no desire to jump into the front row," said Sam with dignity.

The manager's brows relaxed a trifle. "It will be useless to ask for a raise—" he began.

"Nor for an increase of salary," said Sam.

"Then what the devil is it? Fire away."

"My wife asks, or I ask for her, a speaking part, however small, that will give a chance to prove her dramatic ability. My wife has a great deal of talent." Sam braced himself. "The truth is, Miss Malvern isn't in it with my wife, sir."

The manager whirled round in his revolving-chair, and faced the gas-man, whose temerity had brought beads of moisture to his forehead. There was a dramatic pause. Then the manager uttered a short laugh, his good-nature restored by such absurd audacity.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "Nothing bashful about you, is there? So Madeline Malvern, whose name is famous in two continents, to say nothing of Australia, isn't in it with a third-row chorus girl!"

"No, sir; she isn't," said Sam doggedly. "If you heard my wife do the Princess Bonita, you'd say so yourself."

The manager sat up. "Ah! She knows the part of the Princess Bonita, does she? H'm! I should like nothing better than to give that woman the lesson she needs," he was thinking. "If this girl really can play the part halfway decently, the next time Malvern brings my blood up standing with her fool threats of leaving the house with the curtain up, by George, I'll chuck her out, and put the girl on till she comes to her senses! It would serve the spoiled jade right. Is your wife at the theatre now?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes, sir," replied Sam, who had

prepared Suzanne for possible contingencies.

"Bring her here!" commanded the autocrat.

Suzanne came, frightened, nervous, by no means able to do herself justice in the trial scenes required of her. But the great man was used to these tributes to his greatness, and could gauge pretty accurately the ability thus in a measure obscured. He was not given to vain praise.

"You'll do, my dear," he said briefly. "Consider yourself engaged as Miss Malvern's understudy. Keep still about it; keep the part up to the notch; and be prepared to go on at short notice. Meantime continue in the chorus. Your salary will be doubled."

When these humblest of his vassals had departed, the manager chuckled. "I've got the whip-hand of Malvern now," he thought. "I'll give her a lesson she'll remember. And if I'm not greatly mistaken, that girl's a corker!"

The time for the lesson came speedily. The star was vain, capricious, and like the great man himself, autocratic. Her demands were often unreasonable, and she had adopted the dangerous policy of enforcing compliance by threats. She knew she was skating on thin ice, but she also knew—or thought she did—that the manager had no alternative. So she skated boldly on. Within three days of Suzanne's engagement as understudy, Miss Malvern requested that her dressing-room be done over in an unprecedented and expensive fashion. The manager bluntly refused to consider it. The star became angry, declared the place was a pigsty—at which the manager piled fuel on the flame by shrugging his shoulders expressively—and she couldn't and wouldn't put up with it.

"What do you propose to do about it, my dear?" inquired the manager blandly.

The star shot a wicked glance at him.

"I'll let you know when I've decided," she snapped.

That night, just before the last act, in which occurred the great scene with the lost child, Miss Malvern sent for

the manager. The interview was brief. The star sat before her mirror under the hands of her dresser. She raised her fine arm, and pointed contemptuously at certain anachronisms of decoration.

"That," she said, "is the sort of thing I cannot and will not endure longer. Those colors swear at each other. They destroy my artistic equilibrium. I cannot do myself or the public justice with such surroundings."

The manager cast a sarcastic eye about the room. With lightning rapidity he reckoned that the understudy was at that moment disrobed for a change of costume, and that she was of much the same size and figure as the woman before him. Also he remembered that the star's costumes were provided by the theatre. The time for discipline had come!

Again he used the tantalizing formula, "What do you propose to do about it?"

The temper of the actress flared. "I propose to break my contract! Either you give me your word, now, that my dressing-room shall be done over, or—"

The manager interrupted roughly. "Look here! I'll stand for no more of your nonsense! If you break your contract, you break it here and now, and take the consequences. See?"

The star was thunderstruck; she was frightened; but she was also very angry, and she was game.

"As you please, sir," she answered, rising and drawing herself up in her best I-consider-you-the-dirt-under-my-feet manner.

The great man turned to the startled dresser. "Send Miss Malvern's street clothes to Room B on the third tier. Her understudy will be here immediately to be dressed for the act."

It was the star's first intimation that she had an understudy.

Suzanne, in the act of drawing on a pink silk stocking, was petrified by the announcement that she was to go on in the last act as the Princess Bonita, and that exactly seventeen minutes would elapse before her entrance. She sat absolutely motionless, the stocking half

on, her face, a study of emotions, growing white under her rouge.

"Why—but—I—I—can't!" she gasped.

The autocrat strode up, took her by the arm, and inflicted a salutary shake.

"There's no can't about it," he said sternly. "You will!"

"But—oh, it isn't fair! I expected notice—"

"You've got notice—sixteen and a half minutes' notice. Now, hustle!"

Suzanne hustled, or was hustled, to the star's dressing-room, and, three minutes before her call for the stage, was transformed from a gauzy butterfly of the chorus into the charming, high-bred, if very tremulous and breathless, princess of an eccentric realm unknown to maps. The great man came.

"Now, my dear"—he spoke very kindly—"don't be frightened! Everything is in your favor: you know the part; you know the cues and the business—" He turned brusquely to a boy. "Go and get a brandy cordial, and be quick about it— You're accustomed to the stage; and you've got a tremendous chance. Go in and win! And remember that your future, and little Sam's future," he added shrewdly, "depends on your next half-hour's work." The boy brought the brandy. A monotonous voice cried, "The Princess Bonita called." "Here, gulp it down, every last drop of it! Now, my dear, on you go, and good luck to you!"

The next moment Suzanne, as the Princess Bonita, was on the stage. The audience had been informed of Miss Malvern's "sudden indisposition," and greeted her with a kindly round of applause. Perched dizzily in the flies, Sam watched her entrance, his face wet with apprehensive and grimy perspiration. If the "kid" failed to make good now, she might never as long as she lived get such a chance again. From his youth up Sam had been "steady." He had never known the excitement of the gambler; but at that moment he experienced the total loss of self-consciousness, the breathless absorption in the issue of the moment, that marks the

frantic seconds of the last lap of a race, when even timid, retiring women leap upon the benches and shout, "Come on! Come on!" Sam had more at stake than any plunger: he had the "kid's" happiness.

Suzanne's entrance was creditable. She held her head high and walked proudly, as became a princess. Her first lines were delivered rather breathlessly, but they were audible. Then she had a respite. She began to get her bearings, her poise, to control the disconcerting flutter of her breath. So far all was well. But unhappily she caught a glimpse of Madeline Malvern's pale face, with a sneer on it, watching her. The leading tenor joined the displaced star, and, at a remark from her, smiled and shrugged his shoulders. Suzanne felt as if ice-water had been dashed in her face.

Then entered Prince Frederico, and an impassioned love-scene was on. In her swift transition from chorus girl to leading woman, Suzanne had had no time to remember or prepare for all it involved. Now, without anticipation, the moment she had fancied would be heaven on earth had come. Prince Frederico's face was about three inches from her own. The coarsened pores of his skin showed under his make-up; his eyes, dull and heavy, grotesquely rimmed with black and quite empty of emotion, gazed blankly into hers; his left arm was around her shoulders; his right, in his puffed and slashed purple velvet sleeve, with hanging lace ruffles, gesticulated mechanically while he sang:

"Sun of my day, star of my night,
Of all my life the warmth, the light."

Fumes of alcohol—and worse yet, of onions!—issued from his lips with the liquid tenor notes. He swayed slightly and Suzanne steadied him. A sudden shudder of revulsion seized her, ending in a wave of nausea and faintness. She lost her cue and gasped distressfully. The music of the orchestra became a meaningless blare of noise, the stage a mere distressful glare of light; the "house" had, of course, from the ris-

ing of the curtain been a dark, shadowy void.

It was at this moment that a "practical" door opened, and Baby Sam peeped around its edge. His father, relieved of his worst apprehensions by Suzanne's increasing self-possession, had descended from the flies, and sitting on the floor in the place usually occupied by her, chirruped and held up a Teddy bear. But little Sam had recognized his mother in spite of her strange new guise, and with a shrill squeal of joy caught up his little nightgown in both hands, trotted straight to her and held up his sturdy baby arms. Scarcely knowing what she did, actuated by sheer maternal instinct, Suzanne caught up the child and held him close, her cheek against his. It was a touch of nature and was rapturously applauded. This was all very well, if it had ended there, but the scene came to a standstill. Prince Frederico's cue was the exit of the baby, and the baby didn't exit.

"Put him down! Send him to me!" prompted Sam in a loud whisper.

"Put him down! Get him off the stage—quick!" echoed the prompter audibly.

Like one in a dream Suzanne set little Sam on his feet, and catching sight of his father and the Teddy bear, the baby, with another squeal of delight, caught up his little nightgown and trotted off the stage.

But Suzanne had lost her grip; she was dazed; her intelligence was merged in a blind, aching sense of misery. The brandy cordial, unused to stimulants as she was, made her head swim. Her cue was given, but she failed to respond. As for Sam, sooty drops of perspiration rolled down and dropped off the end of his nose. The orchestra began for the third time the plaintive music to which the conscience-stricken princess should have lamented for the child lost in the night and the gathering storm. To relieve the situation the rain-machine was started prematurely. The rain pattered; the thunder crashed and rolled; the lightning flashed; the prompter prompted; and Sam's every nerve became a live wire of inquisition.

Still the erring princess failed to lament, and it seemed as if the curtain must be rung down, when Sam had a flash of inspiration. He hesitated a single second. Would it succeed? Could she forgive him if it did? It was a desperate chance, but Sam in that moment became a plunger against heavy odds for the stake of the "kid's" happiness. He called in a sharp, sibilant whisper:

"Suzanne! Kid!" He succeeded in attracting her attention. "Listen, kid! *The baby—little Sam—is lost. He ran out of the stage-door when no one was looking—*"

He got no farther. The effect was galvanic! The Princess Bonita sprang forward, her eyes grown wild, every muscle tense with fright.

"Lost! My baby! Out in the dark street alone—"

She tried to run, but Prince Frederico caught and held her, while he assured her that little Prince Karl would be found and restored to his ancestral halls, and meantime she was the sun of his day, star of his—

"Let me go!" shrieked the distracted mother. "My baby—my own baby is out in the dark—" ("And the wild terror of the storm," obligingly prompted Frederico) "and he is afraid of the dark," she went on unheeding. "In his little bare feet— Let me go!"

The tenor was astounded at the wild swirl of her acting and the vigor of her muscular resistance. It took all his strength to prevent her from rushing off the stage ("Confound her! why can't she be moderate?"), but he did it, and continued to press his own claims to the exclusion of those of the wandering princeling.

"Merciful heaven, what shall I do?" breathed Suzanne at last, her voice weak and wrung with anguish. With Frederico's restraining grasp still on her shoulder, she raised her shaking hands imploringly: "Give me back my baby safe and I will never see this man again. I thought I loved him, but my eyes are opened." Her voice took on the pleading cadence of a child. "I will be good—I promise—content and

thankful with my husband and baby—*oh, my baby!*" Her voice broke sharply.

There was a moment of dead silence; not a fan waved; not a programme fluttered. Then the orchestra played a low, plaintive measure, and a stalwart policeman entered with the child wrapped in a rubber coat; the unlawful lover slunk shamefacedly away; the Princess Bonita struck her hands sharply together; her face lifted full toward the invisible audience became radiant with an inward flame of rapture; she held out her arms with a beautiful, maternal gesture, and when the child was laid in them, bowed her head for a moment upon its cheek, with the soft, crooning sound common to mothers whether of the human or animal creation. Then with the limelight turned full upon the stage picture, she raised her face, streaming with tears but ineffably lovely, and said in a low, vibrant voice that reached to the last row of the gallery:

"I will keep my word to my dying hour."

Utterly spent, she swayed and sank; the policeman caught the child; and the curtain rolled slowly down.

Then the house rose! Such a thunderous outburst of applause—such bravos—such a wild fluttering of handkerchiefs—the great man had never known in all his long experience. As soon as she could be restored to consciousness sufficiently to walk, the Princess Bonita was led before the curtain by Prince Frederico with little Prince Karl perched on his shoulder, his dimpled feet drumming on the tenor's gemencrusted white satin tunic. The brilliantly lighted house crowded with beautifully dressed women, adorned with flashing jewels, the gay music, the motion and laughter, attracted the baby's attention, and uttering his characteristic squeal of pleasure, he kicked his sturdy little legs ecstatically, pointed his finger at the audience, and cried:

"Pitty! Pitty!"

And under cover of the laughter and applause, the trio left the stage.

"It was the suspense," faltered

Suzanne, when she was quite herself again, and sat braced against a castle wall, surrounded by enthusiastic stage people, Sam, still anxiously uncertain how she would take his ruse, standing near-by.

"Suspense!" cried the great man. "Great Scott, there wasn't any! There wasn't a moment, my dear, when your overwhelming triumph wasn't assured!"

He forgot the agonized moments before Sam, the gas-man, came gallantly to the rescue, and when his own language made the air bluer than the stage lightning.

Miss Malvern came magnanimously forward. "My dear," she said heartily, "I am proud to shake your hand. I haven't half nor a quarter of your talent—"

"Oh, please," cried Suzanne, clinging to the star's large, firm hand, "you don't understand! It's all a mistake—"

"It's no mistake that you are going to star in my next production, which will be an emotional drama," affirmed the autocrat positively, "nor that we begin rehearsals tomorrow. That is"—he turned politely to the star—"if Miss Malvern is sufficiently recovered to resume her part in 'The Princess Bonita'?"

The star bowed her head in silence.

"Good! It will give me pleasure to meet Miss Malvern's views regarding certain changes in her dressing-room," he concluded urbanely.

"Isn't that just like the old man?" remarked one of the company in an undertone.

Then little Sam, his nightgown changed for diminutive blue rompers, trotted on the stage, and was swung gleefully up to Sam's shoulder. Suzanne rose weakly, and went and leaned against his other shoulder, his arm closely about her.

"I am very grateful to you," she said, addressing the manager, "and," turning to the others, "to you all . . . and—" As she felt her husband's arm tighten about her, the reaction came and with a burst of tears she buried her face on Sam's broad shoulder.

HER DREAM

By Helen Hamilton Dudley

ALL through the night, the weary night,
She lay in sharp travail,
Her soul to horror crucified,
And yet she did not fail.
With every cry she named a prayer,
(Each shadow has its gleam!)
Because God knew she suffered well,
He let her have the Dream.

All through the dawn, the quiet dawn,
She nursed His priceless gift,
Till through the fingers of the clouds
The sun began to sift.
Then rose she from her couch of pain;
(Sweet, sweet the bird-songs seem!)
Because God saw how weak she was,
He let her keep the Dream.

All through the day, the golden day,
She sang a gladsome song,
And o'er the roadways of the world
She bore her dream along,
Not hearing how it wailed and wailed,
(How swift the shadows teem!)
Because God saw how hard she tried,
He let her hold the Dream.

But soon she saw how pale its face,
How weak it was, and cold;
At every step it seemed to grow
Too much for her to hold.
The worldlings cried, "It cannot live.
Why strive your Dream to keep?"
. . . Because God, pitying, told her to,
She rocked her Dream to sleep.



ONE DEFINITION

"A PHILOSOPHER, pa—?"
"Philosopher, Willie," answered skimpy little Mr. Hennypeck, "is a married man who does not wish he wasn't."

THE MESSAGE

By Elizabeth P. Bingham

THE rain had ceased an hour ago. The dry Arizona sand, which had absorbed the moisture greedily, now lay dry and white again under the late afternoon sun. An echo of a horse's gallop broke the stillness, resounding across the barren sands and yellow rocks. The silence of an Arizona desert is tense; it has nothing in common with the peaceful stillness of green fields, and a sound is like a sharp cry wrung from its desolate loneliness.

There was no fear, however, in the eyes of the woman sitting on the little porch of the adobe house. She knew who the horseman was, and that he was coming to her. Each hoof-fall rang with an eager, personal note, heralding an approach.

She was a small, slender woman, barely thirty-five; frail, but vibrating with a concentrated nervous force, which during the rare occasions when she was excited became almost painful to look upon. Her large, searching eyes and heavy hair reflected the blue-black of her serge gown, a simple dress, but worn with a grace suggesting a knowledge of clothes not learned in an Arizona desert. Her small, swiftly moving hands shelled peas into the bowl in her lap as if they knew no other occupation.

As the horseman entered the court she dropped the bowl, not too carefully, at her feet, and ran toward him, waving a book in her hand. The man, dismounting as she reached him, dropped his bridle in true Mexican fashion and caught her in his arms.

"Oh, Bob," she cried, with an eager enthusiasm, slightly suppressed through long hours spent alone. "They've come! The books have come! See,

here is 'The Ambassadors.' I couldn't wait to begin. Everything we wanted came, 'Peer Gynt' and the set of De Maupassant and Hewlett's new book. Come and see!"

She dragged him up the steps and into the long living-room. Together they rejoiced over the contents of the large express-package on the table. The room was lined with books, and though crude and severe, had a certain atmosphere of refinement which belonged to the man in the khaki coat as well as to the woman at his side. Robert Wilding was not a handsome man, but when his brown, sensitive face lighted up suddenly and his thin lips smiled, one loved him at once; yet in some vague way the smile suggested a man who remembers.

No one could resist Alice Wilding's enthusiasm, least of all her husband. His eyes shone, too, as she read the titles and caught a paragraph here and there in the text; no one seeing them together could doubt their close companionship, one built upon absolute confidence and perfect understanding. When two people have known the same joys and sorrows, the same sacrifices and renunciations, they grow very far from each other or very near.

"This is disgraceful," she said at the end of fifteen minutes. "You are a ranchman, not a *litterateur*. Tomalli is probably eating up the only grass plot we have, as well as the peas for supper on the porch. Did you have a good day?"

"I suppose it hasn't occurred to you," began Bob Wilding sternly, "that I'll have a good deal more to do, now that you have made a Pegasus out of my plough horse. I'll have Ward's

work on my hands until we find another man. He goes tomorrow."

"Does he?" she said quickly. "I am so glad that Winston is willing to try him. What a man life will make of that boy—and we can look on and feel that we helped."

"You helped," answered the man, slipping her arm through his as she walked with him to the door. "Your spark disturbed his clod. He is coming to say good-bye to you in about an hour—and to bring me the plans for the new stables. I suppose his talent is wasted here and he does need a wider field, but that left wing is going to be a botch without Jim to oversee the work."

She leaned forward as he stood on the step below her, and caught his face between her hands. Slowly she raised it to hers and kissed him tenderly, though a sudden ache tore her heart-strings. It was jealousy of the man who was going into life, for the man who was outside of it. She stood a moment with her hand on his shoulder, then laughed aloud.

"See, Tomalli is eating my only vine; I knew it!"

"I'll go," he responded gaily. "Be sure Jim leaves the plans, as I can't ride over to see him off tomorrow. We must begin on the left wing in the morning."

Alice Wilding watched him as he turned away. "Absorbed—the old way for the old end—interest," she quoted aloud; then she turned to the bowl of peas again, but her eyes were filled with sudden hot tears.

When her work was finished, she carried it into the house and instructed the native woman, who was her sole servant, about the cooking of peas.

Later she went back into the living-room and seated herself by the window, sewing and singing quietly. Yesterday Bob had passed under this window and had stopped to ask, "Alice, are you happy?" and she had answered, "Yes, dear, I am happy." Perhaps today he would come again. The sky and the clear open stretch of hills about her were colored by the dying sun today,

as they had been yesterday. She remembered only because another remembered; for her the snow-capped mountains cut off the past.

The horse which carried James Ward approached the house unnoticed, for there was no listening now in her heart for the hoof-beats. The boy stood in the doorway and spoke to her before she saw him, his strong, clear voice ringing pleasantly in the quiet room.

"May I come in?"

"You may," she returned, mocking his serious tone; then she added, laughing: "Come in and see the books. Your Browning came at last, and Tomalli ate up the cherished cucumber vine while we rejoiced that it had come in time to go back with you."

The boy laid a book regretfully on the table and took up the new one.

"I've brought yours back. Can't I keep it and you keep the new one?"

"My dear James," she said kindly, "Dobe Lodge couldn't get on without that book. All the Browning that Bob and I know we've read from it. But I've put your name in the new one. See! 'James Ward from his friend Robert Wilding, October 10.' How badly I write, don't I, Jim?" she went on gaily, her finger still on the inscription. "You'll be glad enough to see my scrawl, however, when you're alone in New York." Her voice changed at the thought, growing suddenly apprehensive. "You'll miss us and the mountains, Jim, dear. There is no loneliness like that of a great city."

Again she paused; but the dark, straightforward eyes that met hers so steadily checked her words of advice or warning. She motioned to a chair and the boy sat down, still holding the volume of Browning close in his hands.

"Jim, I am as glad of this chance for you as if you were my own brother," she said earnestly. "Charles Winston is a difficult man, but just, and intelligent work and application will appeal to him. Don't try to tell him anything, as he is intolerant of interference—but it is five years since I have seen him and perhaps experience has mellowed him."

"I owe you so much, Mrs. Wild-

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ing!" The boy's voice was lowered in gratitude. "I never knew there was a world beyond mine here in the mountains until you came, and all these new plans seem unreal. I shall never forget what you have done for me."

"I've had Bob write to Mr. Alfred Dun about you," she hurried on. "He can advise you. Think! You are going into our old world, down Fifth avenue and along Broadway. Mr. Dun is one of our oldest friends—and you will be with Charles Winston. Jim," she leaned forward suddenly and her voice trembled like a tense wire vibrating under a blow; the words seemed to force their own utterance. "Jim, when they ask of Bob, you will tell them that he is happy."

In the slight pause which followed she might have read the absolute adoration of one human soul for another human soul.

"Happy?" he said at last. "Happy? Why, Mrs. Wilding, he is the happiest man in the whole wide world. You have created a kingdom for him. From watching you together I have learned what love is, what companionship means, what the world can give two people who live and grow for each other. Happy? I believe there isn't such happiness anywhere else on this earth."

In that moment the sun dropped out of sight and the dim, red afterglow fell across her face; she shielded it with her lifted arm, for it was drawn and gray and her mouth worked as if in torture. Ward sprang toward her with a cry as she dropped the arm and met his gaze so nakedly that the shock was almost a physical one.

"Sit down, Jim," she said, her voice at once controlled, but, for the first time since he had known her, colorless and without life. "I want to tell you myself. They would tell you. I am not Bob's wife—I am not his wife by law."

Ward stared at her dully, his brain refusing to comprehend the words. Slowly the minutes passed, ticked off by the little clock above the fireplace; when the silence became intolerable she spoke again.

"I could not let you go without knowing," she said in a curiously even tone. "They would tell you, or refer to it casually. His wife—his wife cared for none of the things he cared for. She lived abroad most of the time—yet—she—she would not divorce him. We loved each other for years and at last we came away; she has—has never divorced him—and we live here." She was so still that even her lips scarcely seemed to move with the words.

Slowly the meaning of what she said found a place in his numbed thoughts; his world was in ruins, his gods were of clay. Yet out of the chaos came one questioning thought, one thing he must know.

"And you—you were not—" he said at last.

"No," she interrupted, at once answering his unspoken thought. "No, I was not a wife." The truth seemed wrung from her, not as an attempt to explain herself, but as an effort to steady his faith in her as a woman. She knew how surely what she said and did would affect his attitude for all time toward all women. She began to speak rapidly, as if the thoughts which tortured her demanded relief.

"You need never have known; I could have kept you here, for you are the first real friend we have had since then—the only one who has truly entered into our life together. It means much to tell you—to see that expression in your face; if I only was as sure now as I was then, that what we did was right, I could explain to you—could make you see it as we saw it then. Yet our reasons mean nothing; that part is finished and paid for—is done; it is what we are now, what we have made of each other—and for each other. Oh, Jim, we are happy and absorbed—but not satisfied and able to say, 'It is right, it is well.'" She paused for breath, and the fire died away. "I have no children," she said simply.

The boy's silence was cruel, but he could not help her. He faced life before he knew the world, and he could find no words to express his emotion.

"I cannot choose for another soul," she went on. "I cannot bring it into the world with the burden it would have to bear." Her voice broke for a moment and then grew strong again in the rush of the words.

"All is *not* well, not right. In these long years I have grown to see that the world is not large enough, not strong enough, for individual laws; the laws of humanity are greater than my individual needs. I am brave enough to live as I have chosen, to pay as I pay, but my conviction of my right to choose is gone. I am not living truly; perhaps I am not even justified."

There was something heroic in the strength of this woman, who loved and yet faced each day the naked facts of her life and their effects. As an ideal she had failed him; as a woman she seemed to gain, to prove even more real. She leaned forward in her chair and looked straight into his eyes.

"I don't ask to be justified," she said firmly. "I only want to see it clearly for Bob. He had a child—he does not regret or miss—her—but—we have none. We do not speak of it—yet—yet we both strive too hard not to speak. We are happy, we are happy, but there is not peace. Peace does not come in a happiness gained out of the suffering of other human creatures. His wife's suffering was pride, and the child was too young to care, but they suffer; the shadow touches them."

"And you never want to go back, to undo it—to begin again?" said the boy at last. "Would you change this life for the other? I—I thought you loved enough to—"

She leaned her head against the window-frame, and sat for a long time silent and very still.

"What I feel is not shame or remorse, Jim," she answered at last. "It is a clear vision that the universe must move for the good of the greatest number." She paused and looked out toward the last glow in the western sky, then back to him. She threw out

her hand impulsively toward it, the small, upturned palm rose-colored in the red light. "This makes me wonder. Sometimes, in this hour, in this silence which makes all creatures feel like atoms, there comes to me a conviction that all women should live under the shelter of established laws and customs. Beyond these mountains are my people, my birthright, and the cities and streets which were familiar to me—and they are forgotten dreams; I do not regret them—and here I have Bob." Again her eyes met his, defiant of his judgment of the other man; then her face changed, softened and grew wistful. "But it is not well, Jim, not well. No woman should live so—with no lawful right to the name of the man she loves—with no moral right to bear him children."

The boy rose suddenly and stood beside her, the chivalry of his twenty-five untried years at last awake to her need of sympathy. As he raised her hand gravely to his lips for the second time that day her eyes filled with hot, bitter tears. She laid the hand he had kissed on his shoulder.

"Don't go away thinking I am unhappy or weak," she said, unshrinking and unbroken in her distress. "Such an hour as this shall never come to me again. If I have started you on the right road, and you succeed for us both, I shall have paid part of the debt I owe to humanity. Go out into the world I have told you of, and fight for your place in it, but take from it only what is good and clean and strong; what love can mean you know, for I have shown you, but what it really is, you must learn from some better woman."

As he turned blindly and stumbled toward the door, her voice changed. Once more it rang out strong and sure as he had heard it yesterday. It raised his head and cleared the mist before his eyes.

"Remember this always, Jim: real life is not in the success or defeat, it is in the struggle."



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THE PASSING OF ALPHONSE

By George Wetherill Earl, Jr.

THE sun had disappeared below the scrub-fringed hills in the west. Suppers had been cooked and eaten, and the citizens of Windy Creek were directing their footsteps toward the Peg o' Pizen, where things were tuning up for the evening's entertainment. At the far end of the bar-room the improvising fingers of Paderewski Schneider wandered caressingly over the keys of the tin-pan piano. Cancan Kitty had changed her work-a-day clothes for the low-cut bodice that liberally displayed her voluptuous figure, and the many flounced petticoat and skirt that exposed tight-fitting fleshings as she coquettishly swung among the tables, supplying liquid refreshments to a number of thirsty admirers, while several poker fiends placed card-tables where the swinging lamps would cast the proper angle of light on anticipated hands of the pot-taking variety.

Windy Bill, who nightly dealt faro, had arranged his layout preparatory to his evening employment, and was walking toward the door when his eyes caught the low-lying skyline to the south. Hurrying into the open, he let go one of his ear-splitting Indian whoops which always prefaced something interesting, and always brought every man within hearing to his immediate vicinity.

The crowd summoned by Windy's call massed on the low porch as a teamster walking beside his wheelers snapped his jerk-line, and with a prolonged "Whoa-a-a," brought a creaking freight wagon to a stop.

Three spans of mules eased their collars to look inquisitively about them, then bray mournfully as the teamster went to the rear of his lumbering,

hooded caravan and threw on the brake. When he reappeared he was followed by two dust-begrimed men who had footed it in the wagon's wake.

After an excited colloquy, the teamster, accompanied by his companions, approached Red Tim Mooney, proprietor of the Peg, who with Windy Bill was standing slightly aloof from the others.

"These here greasers are goin' to pitch canvas for an eatin' shack," he said, nodding toward his companions. "They want to know the lay o' the land."

"Baldy Gulch," said Tim, critically eyeing his would-be neighbors, and waving a big hand toward the trail where it debouched to follow the creek bottom, up Windy Cañon and into the hills.

Another excited confab on the part of the newcomers drew the crowd out and about the wagon, whose contents resembled more the household effects of a Harlem May moving than freight loaded for transportation over the rough trails about Windy Creek.

The two strangers, who were of pronounced foreign appearance, were giving each other a lightning-like line of talk in a language as unintelligible to their audience as Eskimo. One, heavy-set, black-bearded and unprepossessing, evidently was arguing to remain at the camp. While the other, willowy of build, fair-haired and smooth of face, whose blue eyes evinced signs of trepidation at their surly reception, was urging a continuation of their journey.

"What's the use," said Windy, as the strangers again approached them.

"This way," said Tim, after a moment's hesitation. And he led them to the lot adjoining the Peg on the east.

Two days later, smoke poured from a stovepipe extending beyond a lean-to, wherein presided the bearded new-comer, immaculately clad in spotless white, a box-like chef's cap on his bullet-shaped head. Beneath the adjoining frame-stretched fly, his baby-faced companion flitted from table to table invitingly spread with china, glass and plated ware. Word had been circulated about the camp that at six o'clock the new restaurant would open for business. At the appointed hour a small crowd gathered curiously before a canvas-drop on which was rudely printed:

"CAFÉ CHERICE. MEALS, \$1.00."

When the drop was withdrawn exposing the cosy interior, Windy Bill, accompanied by Cancan Kitty in abbreviated costume, led the way between the double row of tables and was given the place of honor. Before the meal was half over Red Tim proved that his heart was in the right place by sending in to each diner a bottle of Seattle beer to drink success to the new venture.

Windy, who had not taken his eyes off the dapper little man so deftly waiting on the crowded tables, filled his glass and got upon his feet:

"Men—er—r—a," looking down upon the smiling Kitty—"ladies and gentlemen, here's a toast to the Cherries—a black, bitter one that ain't so many, and one with the colorin' of an oxheart that 'ud be a peach in another sort of package."

Kitty pulled him down into his chair before he could further expatiate on the feminine graces of the waiter.

The little one, not understanding the colloquial, went to Kitty and asked her what it all meant; the boisterous behavior of the diners had aroused his curiosity. When she laughingly told him of its purport, he graciously thanked her.

"Ze Windy homme est one cochon!" he said, looking at her laughing escort the while. "You aire ze peach of Windy Creek!" and he gallantly blew her a kiss from his open palm which she returned with interest.

Kitty, after that first meal at the Café Cherice, kicked over the traces. She treated Windy, who was looked upon as her steady, most cavalierly. After several half-hearted turns on the improvised stage at the end of the barroom, she spent the balance of the evening talking to the little foreigner. The next morning when Tim carried his tin cup and plate to his kitchen lean-to for the customary coffee and bacon, he found it deserted and the stove stone cold, while Kitty was in merry chatter under the near-by fly. He crossed over, berating epithets on his tongue tip, but Kitty was too many for him.

"Hel-lo, Red!" she disrespectfully called, when he hove in sight. "You're the very man I want to see. Cool off! Cool off!" she cautioned, as Tim's face lit up turkey-red under his shock of carrot hair. "No more all-day pot-wrestling, all-night ten-twenty-thirty stunts for me. If I'm Kitty the cook I work in the cook shack. If I'm Cancan Kitty, the wild canary, I work my warbler and the tray with a few kicks and splits for exercise. Which is?" and she winked at the little foreigner who had just confided to her his name—Alphonse.

"Do you want your time?" blustered Tim, taken aback at her unusual impudence.

"Huh-huh," she nodded, cocking her head and again closing one eye.

Tim reached into his hip and drew forth a buckskin bag, threw himself in a chair and dumped its contents noisily on the table.

Kitty sat watching him over her coffee, which she gingerly sipped from a cup so frail it was a toss-up in her mind as to whether she would drink its steaming contents before it crumpled up in her hands.

"Three months coming," she said.

Windy and the barkeep entered the café and drew chairs to the table where Tim fumbled his coin. The barkeep longingly eyed the partially eaten breakfast temptingly spread before Kitty, while Windy rubbed his hands in anticipation.

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job," called Kitty. The waiter came eagerly forward and leaned on the table. "You fellows want another waiter, a high-kicker with a voice like a flute?" she asked, looking up into his face, close to her own. "Ain't it like a flute, Dad?" she coyly appealed to the red one opposite her.

"It est not what you say joke? You really—"

"Sure, you dear, pink-cheeked thing!" Half arising from her chair, she threw her arm about his neck and kissed his beardless face.

He stood for a moment in confusion, then rushed to the cooking lean-to and returned with the bewhiskered chef, talking and gesticulating the while.

"You've done it now," said Windy. "They're goin' to throw you out. In the future save your kisses for a white man."

"You wouldn't fill the bill, nohow," she laughed as she turned to the chef, who addressed her:

"Does it mean you would care to wait upon—"

"Cut it out!" interrupted Tim, as if to end the conversation as far as the topic under consideration was concerned. Then to Kitty: "We'll eat here in the future—the grub's better. Bring me some breakfast, and bring it quick!" he savagely ordered.

Digestion was not aided by conversation during the meal. Windy's eyes from time to time went furtively to Kitty's face, but if she noticed his questioning glances she did not heed them. Waiting for the others to finish their breakfast, she sat staring at Alphonse who was busily engaged cleaning the plated ware.

When Tim, with a satisfied grunt, pushed back his chair, they arose simultaneously. Kitty turned toward the rear of the café. Windy went to her side, threw his arms about her and kissed her on each cheek.

At this liberty her face flamed with rage. She jabbed him twice under the chin with her clenched fist. Breaking away from him she turned to her employer.

"Say, Red, if that dog does that

trick again, it's either you kill him—or I will!"

Drawing back a white crêpe sleeve, she wiped her flushing cheeks on her bare arm.

Café Cherice was such a howling success that the newcomers made a winning bid for popularity. Each night when through with his work the bearded one sat in a poker game, and was a cheerful player—win or lose. Alphonse became the most popular man in the camp; bubbling over with repartee of the very-much-to-the-point kind, he was a raconteur of no mean parts. He had a host of stories mostly of the genus classed as spicy and risqué in a more cultured aggregation, but at Windy Creek they were as caviar to a satiated appetite. His attentions to Kitty were such as turned Windy Bill green with jealous envy. Windy, heretofore, had monopolized Kitty. In fact, he had had her all to himself during the work-a-day hours when the camp was busy with sluice-box or pick, but now the new régime had overthrown the old.

In any community other than a rude mining camp the attentions of Alphonse to Kitty would have caused gossip, not to say scandal. Owing to Windy's very evident jealousy in the premises, the camp kept its mouth well shut, but its eyes were not closed to what might be termed the immodest behavior of the only woman about the diggings.

Time and again Windy endeavored to pick a quarrel with the little foreigner and undoubtedly would have succeeded had not several of the better class citizens quietly, but firmly, called him off.

Whether it was Windy's covert threat or the climate—Windy Creek was low-lying when compared to the surrounding country, but not necessarily unhealthy—the little foreigner became wan and pale and self-centred. His repartee was no longer effervescent. His stories less risqué, hence less appreciated. Windy nagged him at every opportunity.

One night, when business was dull at the Peg, and the barroom closed at an

hour earlier than usual, Windy, sitting alone on the porch, saw Kitty, after hurriedly glancing about her, enter the pitch-dark café. He stole over to the fly and did his best to catch the drift of a mumbled conversation, which slowly died away and all was silent. Cold and stiff with the chill night air and the falling dew, he kept vigil. At daybreak he heard a noise within, then the little foreigner appeared, his arm about Kitty's waist. As he kissed her in parting, Windy, who had stolen up behind them, struck him a brutal blow in the face, which sent him sprawling senseless to the ground. Kitty was upon Windy in an instant, and fought him like a tigress, tooth and nail. It took Tim and the barkeep, who were awakened by Kitty's shrill cries, some moments to break the hold she finally had taken on his luxuriant hair, which she was literally tearing from his head.

Many were the questioning glances thrown upon Windy's scratched face, and the swollen and blackened eye of Alphonse, which gave visual, though circumstantial, evidence of personal combat. Inquisitiveness being a habit well under control on the Creek, the merits of the case were never inquired into nor openly discussed.

It was only the level-headed advice of the red one which prevented the bearded chef from shooting Windy Bill offhand. Tim finally convinced him that a man, particularly a foreigner, would be given short shrift if he committed murder to redress the wrongs of another. At Windy Creek every tub had to stand on its own bottom.

One morning when Red Tim and the barkeep sauntered over to the café for breakfast, they found it closed tight, while the cooking lean-to was without occupant. When Windy, who after his

attack on Alphonse no longer had entrée to the café, learnt of this he immediately made search for Kitty, to find that she had disappeared.

About nine o'clock the bearded one left the shack the foreigners had erected in the rear of the café and hurriedly entered the Peg for some brandy. Brimming over with importance, he announced that a son had been born to Alphonse. He left a liberal sum with the barkeep to set them up for the boys, and, in his excitement, even shook hands with Windy Bill, lounging disconsolately at the bar. As he rushed off he informed the latter that the newcomer would be prepared to receive visitors at noon.

The news flew from claim to claim. The entire camp paraded in and out of the barroom celebrating the event, and awaiting the opportunity to gaze upon the first inhabitant of the community, who had not arrived of his own volition.

At twelve o'clock precisely, the door of the shack was partly opened to admit the first group of visitors. The favored few, headed by Red Tim and Windy, crowded into the room to see Kitty reclining in a low-backed chair, a little lump of whimpering pink flesh bundled up in her arms.

"Where's the father?" asked Windy, so shaken with emotion that his voice did not rise above a whisper.

"He est here!" said the bearded one, swelling with importance, as he politely bowed. "And ze mother," glancing toward Kitty, "est there."

Windy started back in surprise. As his eyes became accustomed to the dim interior, he saw, on the farther side of Kitty, a bunk, wherein reclined the erstwhile Alphonse, in whose wide open blue eyes burned the feverish light of maternity.



NOT A SUCCESS

SHE—How about that friend of yours who went on the stage? Is he going ahead?

HE—No, he was going afoot the last I heard.

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

By Elizabeth Chandler Hendrix

IT might have been the remains of a dwelling-place of some forgotten prehistoric tribe.

The mountain had been laid open as with a single blow from a giant axe and at the bottom of the deep cleft huddles this cluster of decaying mud and brush huts. Before each hut, driven into the ground or a fallen log, is a rough wooden cross, mostly gray and lichen-covered and toppling at various angles of decay. Through broken walls are visible the embers of dead house-fires with utensils of crude pottery scattered around.

Just above the roof of the huts the walls of the cliff are punctured with cave-like openings and decorated with drawings of strange design, and far above, across the wedge-like opening at the top, so far that it seems to hang like a floating veil, stretches a blue strip of summer sky.

The silence of ages is upon it. No sign of life is about the huts; no wild, skin-clad creature peers out of the caves in the cliff; but in the narrow strips of terraced gardens green things are growing and along the rocky arroyo are pink pyramids of blooming peach trees.

One might fancy one's self but newly awakened from a Rip Van Winkle sleep in which the clock of time has turned backward instead of forward, not twenty years but twenty centuries. Nevertheless, the time is the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eight and the place, on this great continent of North America.

And the inhabitants of the village are not to be sought in the burial-caves in the cliff. Yesterday the women were grinding corn and tending the house-

fires, and the men were tilling the terraced gardens; today they are assembled in the little 'dobe church whence comes a droning like the distant hum of insects.

They are not saying mass for the repose of the dead, but convening a court for the administration of justice upon the living.

Strange things have been happening in this out-of-the-way corner of creation, things so strange as to mark an epoch in the slow-moving history of centuries and become a part of the traditions to be handed down to future generations along with those legends of the coming of the soldiers of Cortez, and that other strange man, he of the black gown and shaven crown who taught them of the Blesséd Mother and her Holy Son, who built their church, left them rosaries and crucifixes and then passed on his way.

By and by the murmur ceases and a strange figure appears in the low doorway of the church, a noble, imposing figure, wrapped from chin to feet in a snow-white blanket. He pauses a moment, then steps out into the sunshine to be followed by another and another. It is the gobernador and his staff. Each is wrapped in a white blanket and carries a cane of red Brazil wood in his hand, an emblem of dignity and mark of office. Behind these come the soldiers, distinguished by the absence of blankets and the presence of spears on the end of their canes. Following the soldiers come the people.

Slowly and in silence they file across an open space to a larger ruin hard by and here under the open sky the court convenes. There is no sheriff, no clerk,

no pleaders, only these grave old men, sitting in solemn row under the shadow of the crumbling walls of their ancient temple of justice.

The soldiers arrange themselves at guard on either side and the people sit on the ground, leaving an open space in front of the gobernador.

There is a long pause in which the gobernador sweeps the crowd with his keen old eyes. They stir uneasily. For a moment he holds them with his gaze; then bowing his head murmurs a prayer in a strange tongue. The people cross themselves piously and then a man and woman arise and with serene faces come forward and stand before him.

They are the prisoners at the bar.

It is the old, old story; old as the eternal hills which encompass them, and which proves men and women to be the same under their skins, whether they be the blanket-clad cave-dwellers of the Sierra Madre or the fashionably arrayed of modern New York.

They had loved—not wisely, but too well.

He was married and the chains galled. Perhaps they struggled against it as thousands of other men and women have done, saying over and over again, "We will not!" Then, as the flesh weakened, in their savage souls echoed the world-old sophistry, "We've got a right to what happiness we can get out of life!" and they took it.

They could not run away to Europe and stifle their consciences with travel and dissipation. The best they could do was to steal some beans and corn from the caves of their neighbors and betake themselves to another cave in a distant part of the mountain.

Small wonder, in view of the limited resources for amusement and diversion, that the primitive cave-dweller wearied of his mistress. They remained away one year; then, perhaps on the plea of going to search for food—there are always pretexts enough—he wandered back to the village in the Barranca and was captured.

The woman waited for him, shaken by the same hopes, and doubts, and fears which have shaken all other

women of her kind since the foundation of the world. She looked about the cave in which they had been happy together and told herself over and over again: "He will come back!" Then she remembered that other woman—the one to whom by all the rites of their simple creed he belonged. In her untutored soul was a vague consciousness of the subtle, intangible, irresistible power of that tie which we may repudiate and deny, scoff at and scorn, but which somehow holds when passion has burned out and newer fancies cease to please. She knew where to seek him. She followed him to the village, where she also was captured.

And now they were arraigned before the bar of justice to pay the penalty of their crime.

There were no witnesses; no oaths were administered. An old woman, stooped and trembling, with wisps of gray hair about her withered face, came and stood beside her daughter, and another woman, harsh and stern-faced, with an infant in her arms, made as if to join the group, then paused and sat down on the ground near-by.

The gobernador addressed his questions to the culprits and they made brief but prompt answers. There was neither denial nor excuse. They pleaded guilty and threw themselves on the mercy of the court. The examination was brief. The old gobernador stood up, and he seemed to have grown taller as he lifted his red wand on high and solemnly pronounced sentence. The people bowed their heads as if in token of submission and crossed themselves devoutly. Two soldiers drove their spears into the ground and walked a few yards away to where a freshly hewn post had been planted in the earth.

The first signs of emotion stirred the countenances of the accused. The man smiled a half-sardonic smile and shrugged his shoulders as if to say: "Oh, what's the use! We've got to pay!" and dropping his blanket walked deliberately to the post.

The soldiers seized him and, wrapping his arms about the post so that he hugged it closely, bound his hands

securely on the opposite side. When this was finished a stalwart Indian who had been stolidly looking on drew a whip from under his blanket and laid vigorous blows upon the exposed back. The culprit made neither movement nor sound and when he had received the requisite number of lashes and his hands were unbound he walked calmly back and wrapped himself again in his blanket.

All eyes were now turned upon the woman. She was neither brave nor stoical, for her eyes grew large and her body quailed when she looked upon the post. Appealingly she turned from one to another. She was a soft, pretty little creature, not strong and harsh-visaged as the other women of the tribe, but there was neither pity nor blame in the immobile faces turned to hers. With one last, long glance at the inexorable countenance of the gobernador she dropped her blanket and, clad in a single little white garment, walked trembling to the post.

The soldiers laid no hands upon her, but of her own accord she placed her soft, round arms about the post and bent her slender, brown back to the lash.

The people had sat on the ground and looked on unmoved while the man was being chastised. Now, at the first movement of the executioner's arm, they arose with one accord and, while the sickening sound of the lash continued, they stood reverently, with backs turned to the scene.

The man who had endured his own punishment so stoically groaned as the first blow fell upon the woman's back, and made as if to tear her from the post, but the woman with the baby in her arms leaned forward with parted lips and a strange glitter in her eyes.

When the executioner dropped his lash there were crimson stains on it, for the flesh of the woman was tender, and he walked away with head bowed and arms hanging limply.

The man who had stood panting between two guards now took the woman by the hand and went forward and knelt before the gobernador. If his

love had grown lukewarm, it revived now with renewed ardor, for he prayed the gobernador to free him from his wife and marry him to the woman at his side. But his prayer was denied, and he was ordered to return to his legitimate spouse, with admonitions to kill deer, and sow corn, and gather crops that there might always be food in the cave for her to eat.

The wife had been badly used, and undoubtedly she rejoiced in the downfall of her rival; but, as her recreant husband approached with lagging steps, a smile softened her harsh visage and she lifted the infant to greet him.

And the other woman—the poor, pretty, sinning woman—what of her? We all know how it fares with the correspondent in our country. Would it be so here?

She must have a husband. So decrees the wise old gobernador. She is a menace to other homes; the remedy is a home and husband of her own. She must be married—not tomorrow, nor next month, but here and now. He glanced toward a group of young braves, sitting apart in their bright-hued blankets. Who will marry this woman who has stolen the husband of another and been publicly whipped for her crime?

There was a long pause and then one, the tallest, the handsomest and strongest of all the company, arose and stood beside the guilty woman. He did not glance at her, but kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the gobernador. They stood thus for a moment; then from his great height he stooped, and tenderly his hand sought hers. She gave one timid upward look in which remorse, repentance and wonder mingled; covered her face with her hands and her body shook with noiseless sobs.

A fool was he? Perhaps; perhaps not. Almost any man will love a woman when he believes her to be an angel, but it takes a very unusual man to love her when he knows her to have been a sinner. And how about the woman who knows herself so loved? A fool, perhaps, and perhaps wise with a wisdom passing that of sages; for

not the devotion of the ninety-and-nine virtuous wives who went not astray can equal that of this one who sinned and was forgiven.

A moment before, the woman knelt there with her fellow-culprit; now another holds her hand and they kneel on the same spot, while the gobernador pronounces them man and wife. Now his exhortations are addressed to the woman, that she weave blankets and gather herbs, that she make tesvino and tortillas, and help her husband with plowing and sowing, so he be not reproached with a lazy wife in his dwelling.

The ceremony is over and the bride and groom stand in the open space, while the villagers come up one after another and gravely shake hands. The other couple stand apart, looking on

half sullenly, somewhat perhaps as the good son might have regarded the rejoicing over the return of the prodigal. At last they, too, fell into line and as the man extends his hand, half ruefully, to his rival, the wife lifts her baby to smile into the face of the new-made bride.

The sun has long since crossed the strip of blue which roofs the Barranca. The west is aglow with a light which reaches to the zenith and sheds its radiance like a golden rain into the mists of the valley. The old gobernador wraps his blanket closer around him and moves away like a stately ghost into the shadows, and the man—the very tall man in the gorgeous blanket—leads his meek and penitent bride away to his own cave in a distant part of the mountain.



NO SPRING TILL NOW

By Thomas Walsh

NO spring till now—though in its hushing voices
 The garden warned me of the year's decline;
 "Not here," they said, "the springtime of thy choice is";
 And in the falling star I read a sign.

The long night through, I followed at its warning,
 And now—the mocking fires and pitfalls passed—
 Footsore and faint I wait the soul's white morning
 Upon the threshold of the spring at last.

No spring till now! O heart, stay yet thy gladness,
 Ere yet thou leav'st the crags and marshes drear
 Where thou hast won thy way in toil and sadness
 One last farewell—turn thou and bless them there!

Yea, Hope supernal o'er my brow uncloses
 The golden vials of a perfect day;
 And see, my gaping wounds all turned to roses,
 My soul, a lark that wings upon its way!

THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD

By Maud Grange

MRS. MIDDLETON fairly blew into her friend's tiny library, a small whirlwind of feminine mischief. Without any preamble she seized May's book, tossed it into a corner and, firmly grasping both hands, spun her around the room.

"Now," she said breathlessly, "if I've shaken some of that everlasting literature out of your head, run upstairs and put on your prettiest dinner gown. I'm going to carry you off to meet a new man!"

May, laughing, dropped a kiss on Kitty's flushed cheek. "You know perfectly well, you scandalously persistent young person, that I'm not in the least interested in your handsome and distinguished new man!"

Kitty bubbled into delighted laughter. "Wherefore I produce a veritable novelty: a man who actually sought the North Pole to avoid the awful effect he had on lovely woman. Miss May Atherton, I fain would introduce you to Wilton Kellog, the ugliest man in the world!"

May laughed and moved swiftly toward the door. "I'll be dressed in five minutes," she called over her shoulder.

She expected something extraordinary. Matchmaking Kitty's new men always were extraordinary, but anything so fearful and wonderful as the man she found herself gazing at in Mrs. Middleton's drawing-room an hour later was beyond her wildest nightmares. Tall, broad-shouldered and athletic, Wilton Kellog was perfect in body, no doubt—but his face! There is no describing it. Kitty was right. He *was* the ugliest man in the world. Nature could never again produce such a masterpiece of the grotesque.

To look at him seemed a positive in-

delicacy, and yet all during dinner it was only by a conscious effort that May could turn her fascinated eyes away from him; and soon as the effort ceased, she was again absorbedly staring. And all the while her mind was busy with a problem. What wonderful gift had Nature given him to atone for his hideousness? It seemed impossible that there should be no compensation for such a wanton mismaking of a face. Already she was discovering that he had a charm of speech and manner which would have gone far in making one forget any ordinary lack in looks; and she found herself possessed of a firm determination to like him, born partly of sympathy and partly of sheer feminine contrariness.

Kellog seemed rather less impressed by May's appearance, though her beauty was almost as wonderful as his ugliness. He gazed at her frequently, it is true, but behind his perfectly well-bred attentiveness there seemed to be far more of apprehension than of admiration. Kitty and her husband could not help exchanging amusedly comprehensive glances across the table as they led Kellog on to talk of his adventures in the Far North. May listened to the really exciting tales with profound interest until Kitty broke in, her small face radiant with mischief:

"What you did in the ice is all very well, Wil, but why you took to it is the more thrilling story. Tell us about that!"

A dull crimson suffused the mahogany tan of Kellog's face and there was a shamed pleading in the glance he cast from his hostess to his host, as Hugh Middleton threw back his head and roared. May felt her own face flame with indignant sympathy. How *could* they be so tactless?

"Are reasons ever more interesting than results?" she asked lightly, to fill in the succeeding pause.

"Some are," answered Kitty impressively, and then she mercifully rose and left the unhappy Kellog to recover his composure.

"Kitty! How could you?" May passionately whispered as soon as they were alone.

"Could what?" demanded Kitty innocently.

"To remind that poor, ugly man 'that,' as you put it, 'he actually took to the North Pole to avoid the awful effect he had on lovely woman!' Oh, Kitty, that was barbarous!"

Kitty collapsed on the couch in a spasm of merriment. "Do you really like him?" she asked, when she could speak.

"Of course I like him!" May answered indignantly. "He is one of the most charming men I have ever met. Do you think, pray, that I am one of those foolish women who care about a man's face?"

Kitty promptly went off into another of her unaccountable fits of laughter, and if Hugh Middleton and Kellog had not entered the room at that moment, May's exasperation would probably have taken the primitive form of shaking her.

It was inevitable that during the remainder of the evening May should devote herself to effacing the memory of Kitty's ill-timed levity by a display of interest she would certainly never have ventured to show any other man. Kellog met her advances with a certain baffling reserve which naturally she set down to a consciousness of his ugliness. She redoubled her efforts to make him forget it, but it was not until she forgot it herself in the delight of discussing the books she loved with a kindred spirit that he perceptibly thawed. It was then that she proffered and he accepted an invitation to call.

Alone in her room that night May felt the dual delight of a new interest in life and complete self-approbation. At last she had met a man who did not bore her; a man, moreover, who

must of necessity be devoid of vanity and for whom, therefore, she could display her interest without a self-conscious thought. To her it had been left to discover the wonderful personality which his ugly mask concealed, and perhaps to extract the stings which the avoidance of other women had left in his heart. And if she could love him—but it was too soon to think of that, so she called down a blessing on Kitty's frivolous blond head and went to bed.

In the morning her first waking thought was, "How soon will he consider it proper to call?"

Evidently his ideas of propriety were of the strictest, for she had time to work herself into a fever of impatience before the day finally came when he was ushered into her little library.

She rose from the midst of the books in which she had vainly been trying to interest herself, with an exclamation of delight, and came forward with outstretched hand.

"I was beginning to be afraid that you had gone back to the North Pole," she said reproachfully.

Kellog murmured something vaguely polite, and if May's fascinated eyes had been less intent upon his fiendish incongruity of feature, she could not have failed to notice his apprehensive discomfort.

Intent upon putting him completely at his ease and establishing him in cordial relations with the one woman who could thoroughly appreciate him, she told him frankly how impatiently she had been awaiting his visit and permitted him to see how deep her interest in him had already become.

He received her confidences in politely smiling silence and as soon as a small pause in the flow of her talk permitted, picked up a rare first edition from the table with an appropriately admiring remark, and thereafter kept the conversation strictly to books, a subject on which May was at her best. In the pleasure of displaying her treasures to so thoroughly appreciative a companion she quite forgot her sentimentally benevolent intentions, and when she finally remembered them the call had

already prolonged itself to an unconventional length, and Kellog promptly took his leave.

May's interest in the ugliest man continued to grow as time went on. She saw as much of him as she possibly could, which, after all, was not a great deal, for, despite his obvious admiration—which, by the way, was only obvious when she confined her talk to impersonal subjects, though somehow she failed to realize this—his calls were infrequent.

In the intervals between them she found herself wholly neglecting her books while she planned "chance" meetings. His impossible ugliness still set him so far apart from average mankind that she felt no womanly qualms on this score, and saw him when and where she could. With each meeting she became more deeply fascinated. The brilliancy of his mind was quite as wonderful as his personal appearance, and on the rare occasions when the intangible mist of his baffling reserve lifted, it was to give her glimpses of a nature more lovable than she had ever dreamed that a man could possess. At the end of three delightful, but exasperating, months she was convinced of three things: that she could never be happy apart from him; that he was deeply in love with her; and that the modesty his face couldn't help giving him would prevent his ever asking her to marry him.

Two days after arriving at these sage conclusions May shut herself in her room with strict orders that she was not to be disturbed. But no servants could keep out Kitty. She burst in, a small, reproachful gale, took her friend by the shoulders and shook her violently.

"What do you mean," she demanded angrily, "by sending Wilton Kellog off into the depths of Africa? You'll never meet another man worthy to lace his boots, I tell you that!"

"I didn't send him," poor May sobbed. "I—I—" Her voice failed her and she hid her blushing face in the pillow.

Kitty sat down hard, laughing through her tears of vexation. "Oh,

how could you? I suppose I ought to have warned you—but how could I know you'd be such an idiot, too? And if I had you wouldn't have cared for him—and I wanted you to marry him!" she exclaimed incoherently.

"What *are* you talking about?" came with muffled dignity from the depths of the pillow, and irate Kitty settled herself to explain.

"For all your icy beauty, books-are-more-interesting-than-men pose, I knew you would fall in love with him. No woman born of woman has ever been able to resist the combination of his scandalous ugliness and general loveliness with her own vanity, which would convince her that she alone of all the world had brains enough to discover his fascination. And I knew he would fall in love with you, if you gave him a chance by displaying a little dignity, instead of literally throwing yourself at his head like all the other fool-women who have kept him dodging ever since he put on long trousers. The poor fellow actually never had a minute's peace in his life until he went to the North Pole. You didn't behave nearly as well as I hoped, but he was beginning to care for you in spite of the way you chased him, when you had to spoil it all by proposing. Did you think that a great big, splendid fellow like Wilton Kellog would marry a woman who thought he was such a freak—and was such a freak herself—that she wasn't ashamed to ask him?"

So many new thoughts were crowding May's unhappy brain that for a moment she was unable to speak. Then one took precedence.

"How did you guess," she gasped, "that I had proposed to him?"

"Because," answered Kitty calmly, "I proposed to him myself, four years ago. That was the final blow which drove him to the North Pole!"

"But he can't stay put there," said May, brightening a little. "He must come back, some day."

"Some day—some day—" Kitty began singing, and then May flung her arms about her rival in rejection and kissed her vehemently for Kellog.

THE UNIQUE DEATH

By Flora McDonald Thompson

“THERE are two deaths, I see very well,” said Voltaire. “To cease to be, that is nothing; to cease to love and to be lovable, that makes an incomparable death.” Sainte-Beuve, finding himself in the jaws of the “incomparable death,” was inconsolable. He fled from friends and accustomed haunts, in solitude to adjust himself to it—the mortal chagrin of middle age. Some of the letters that he wrote at this time show that he came near to realizing the fine agony of a still more mysterious, an infinitely more humiliating experience of mortality—the unique death of the woman who has achieved her forty-fifth year.

Woman alone of all God's creatures stands by and watches herself die. Woman, the one among all created beings destined to find in sex the accomplishment of her whole life's purpose, awakes one day to consciousness of the fact that she, the essential woman, the preëminent creature of sex, is dying and at length is dead, while yet herself looks on, and weeps, and wonders. Hedged in by all the circumstances of the existence that the woman once enjoyed; entangled by the relations she has formed and which endure; subject to necessities that, once a part of her nature, are now to her meaningless and hideous; revolting against the present, yet comprehending nothing beyond, here she is—hair, eyes, throat, breast, thighs, legs, hands, attest that she is passing; the body sags, shrivels, stiffens, its one-time glorious function arrested, its mission on earth at an end. Nor has the woman passed more completely from the body than from the soul; desire is dead; love is dead. In

fine, the woman is dead and this—this It—remains, a shell of life, the husks of a soul, from which the world each day draws farther and farther away. Weird solitude! Gruesome destiny! Unique death!

The unique death is well defined in science pertaining to the mind and body. A Frenchman, having cognizance of its moral relation, discerns it in the “sad humility” of the woman who is past forty-five. A French woman, Madame de Castiglione, buried herself when this death came upon her. Beautiful and adored, she retired from the world, covered her face from the gaze of human-kind, and, in silence and solitude, waited for It, too, to pass away. Only once did she emerge. One night, seized by the whim that, so it has been said, sometimes makes a graveyard full of movement at midnight, she came forth and, unexpected, unannounced, entered upon a gay scene where were assembled friends who had flattered and fêted her while she lived. When the friends recovered from their surprise, they were . . . kind to her. This completed her humiliation and her eyes never looked upon her world again.

Unmistakable signs and symptoms herald the approach of the unique death. “When men no longer gave me a second glance, I knew that I was middle-aged,” said one woman. “When men talked to me at great length about my husband's virtues, I knew that the end was near,” said another woman. “When I began buying gloves and collars a half-size larger, I knew that the days of woman were numbered for me,” said another. “I was still a great belle,” said one more woman, “but behold! it appeared that the men who

courted me were anywhere from sixty years to eighty-five. They unmistakably adored me, and women no less unmistakably envied me; yet I was no longer happy; I missed something; so I arose and went to my godmother to ask her what it was.

"It is the fire of youth that has departed," said my godmother. "You will be forty-five your next birthday."

But chief among the premonitory symptoms of the unique death is the perverted pride of sex which many of the victims show. It is like the hunger a dying man manifests when he sits up in bed and resolutely eats a hearty meal to prove the life left in him . . . for a few minutes. Who has not been painfully surprised to see women of previously irreproachable lives, suddenly, at forty, become desperately bent on doing skirt-dances in public; unless they are watched, they will go to a matinee décolleté; they talk of the stage, and some believe that there is their career; they will play Sappho; they will sing (and undress) the part of Thais. They tell you that they are very much like Trilby—and they are willing to prove it. A Boston spinster it was, aged forty, and a school-teacher, who, after spending a summer vacation in Paris, on returning home wrote back: "I am not at all contented here; I do so long for Paris—for the art and the cafés."

Search the records of American divorce and note how many of the offending women are verging on forty-five. Be charitable ever after, for it is not depravity, but the death-hunger of sex, which explains the ridiculous and reprehensible conduct of these women. Some are unconscious; others act deliberately, in desperation, knowing that the end is near and seeking by a super-woman effort to avert it—to stave it off. What scenes they make, when they are told that, *malgré tout*, the passing of the woman has begun in them! They have experienced unfamiliar symptoms and have gone to a doctor. He speaks the truth bluntly. They scream; they have hysterics; they are ready to kill the man for telling them. This one has gloried in her emancipation from sex;

has never married. Oh, the remorse, the vain, vain regret, now that the end is in sight! Another, married, has advocated woman's rights; has refused to be a mother. Good heavens! to have the rights of a mere human being—an abstraction, an It—what is that now, when she, the woman-creature, the might-have-been-mother one, is passing away forever?

It is a great thing to be merely a woman. This the superior woman often knows too late; this the normal woman realizes more or less as she goes along; but all alike shall witness their glory depart from them while yet they live. Resistance is vain, and worse. Notice the millinery of the woman of forty-five who is rebellious against destiny. How pitifully grotesque to see a gay little hat cocked coquettishly on the ghost of her departed youth, while the woman herself, ashen-hued, hollow-eyed, glances about timidly and sighs wearily! Remark, too, how often, from the dust of the departed woman is shaped the petticoated reformer. "I was converted to female suffrage the other day," said a knowing woman. "I was converted for a minute, that is; then I saw myself in a mirror; I saw that I was forty-five and my conversion was reduced to an absurdity. What can the ghost of a dead woman know of the real necessities of the living?"

The one-hundredth woman, condemned to the unique death, lives happy ever after, a gentle shade, selfless as sexless, reposing in "*la crépuscule de la jeunesse*"—the twilight of youth—as a Frenchman delicately and sympathetically has styled middle-age. No vain regrets, no movements of reform, disturb her there, for, in the misty light about her, the ugliest shapes soften, the worst abuses are obscured; she even sees dimly her own gray hair and wrinkles. Her hands, which have become superfluous in everybody's scheme of doing, fall naturally and comfortably into a loose clasp about her knees while she sits, and looks, and looks upon the world wherein she used to live and have a being; her lips, not wanted any more

for kissing, acquire quite insensibly a habit of prayer—very quiet, almost wordless, prayer. Utterly *de trop* and understanding it, she rests serenely in the twilight, waiting—waiting the perfect end, whatever and whenever it may be.

It was a dove-colored spinster in Minnesota, Aurilla Furber by name, who, resting so in the twilight, wrote:

I know of worlds with morning in their skies,
With dews, fresh buds and merry-winged
birds

To feed the gaze of strong, courageous eyes;
A sinking sun and silence now is mine,
And in the west one dull, red line.

Thus, even to the unique death, a woman possessing the "strength to sit still"—*savoir s'asseoir*—may say:
"O Death, where is thy sting! O
Life-in-death, here is thy victory!"



AT THE DOOR OF A HEART

By Theodosia Garrison

TO you, who, in all certainty,
Will here inhabit after me,
I leave this certain word, no more,
To bid you welcome at this door
To your least hand-touch swinging free.

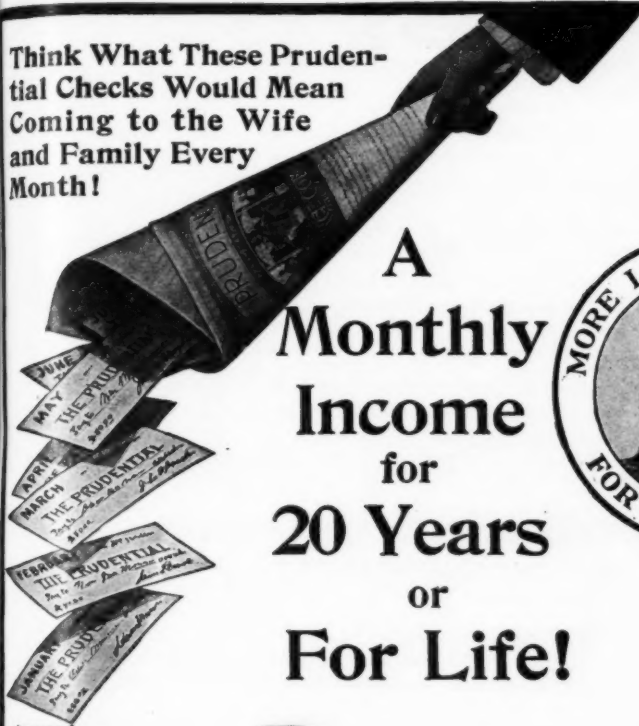
Long since I entered here, as one
Enters in darkness and alone
A house deserted, barred and chill;
I but a transient tenant, still
'Twas my hand gave it to the sun.

I lighted it with cheer, I brought
The best of mirth and hope and thought
To make it beautiful. Be true
To this fair home I leave to you,
Seeing 'twas but for you I wrought.

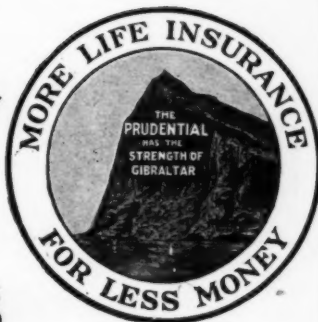
Ah, here a gentle mistress be
Nor close this wide door utterly
On those who stand without and bring
Their sorrow to this sheltering,
Since in your hands must rest the key.

And some day if a word should wake
Thought of one tenant passed, but make
A sister prayer for her, and say,
"Though in this heart she dwelt one day,
She left it lovelier for Love's sake."

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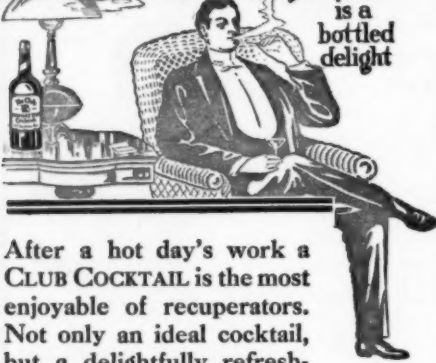
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